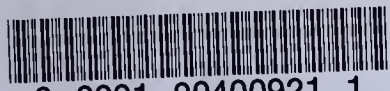


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THE INTERPRETATION OF
LITERATURE

*A DISCUSSION OF LITERARY PRINCIPLES
AND THEIR APPLICATION*



THE INTERPRETATION OF LITERATURE

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PREFATORY NOTE

LITERATURE is art. Truly literary study, therefore, should begin at the art centre, and should first seek to appreciate in a literary work that which is essential. Such is the point of view of this little book; and toward such an interpretation of literature it would offer an humble contribution. The fullest study of literature means more than this: it means especially the study of humanity through the most effective medium of human expression. Such matters, however, are beyond the scope of the present discussion.

W. H. C.

HAMILTON, N.Y., March, 1896.

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As imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

SHAKSPERE'S "A Midsummer-Night's Dream."

Was wir als Schönheit hier empfunden,
Wird einst als Wahrheit uns entgegen gehn.

Schiller's "Die Künstler."

Beauty is truth, truth beauty, — that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

KEATS'S "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

Art remains the one way possible
Of speaking truth, to mouths like mine at least.

BROWNING'S "The Ring and the Book."

PART I
GENERAL PRINCIPLES

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS LITERATURE ?

DEFINITIONS of literature are legion ; and most current conceptions of it are vague and ambiguous. The difficulty arises both from the complexity of the subject and the poverty of the language. We have only one term to denote several distinct things ; and the word literature has thus a variety of uses. More than one of these uses may be legitimate ; but it is surely worth our while to seek that which is most significant. As a step in this direction, we shall find it profitable to consider some of the representative theories.

VARIOUS CONCEPTIONS OF LITERATURE

The broadest conception of literature makes it include all record in language of the thought of man. Practically, this means all

record of valuable thought; for of course no one would think of applying the term literature to every human utterance.

Narrower conceptions are mostly based upon two theories. The first of these is that literary quality depends upon outward form. There are some who make this the sole test of literature. The theory is thus expressed by one eminent writer: "To entitle anything to be classed as literature, it must be so written that, apart from the meaning conveyed, its mere style shall be such as to give pleasure." In this sense, literature has been defined as "the class of writings distinguished for beauty of style or expression." Such a definition would include history, criticism, philosophy, theology—in short, any subject-matter embodied in beautiful form.

The second theory is that literary quality depends upon a certain kind of substance, form being merely incidental. This theory excludes all thought having merely practical purposes, seeking only the ends of knowledge, or appealing only to particular classes.

It includes thought appealing to the general human mind or heart, seeking the ends of inspiration and delight, having æsthetic or ideal purposes.

These two theories are held either separately or in various modes of combination. From the conditions thus created, arise many conflicting definitions. These divergent views cause much confusion ; and they serve to emphasize the necessity of a well-defined, adequate, and logical conception. It will help us in this direction if we set aside for the moment all preconceived theories in order to note certain real and natural distinctions.

LOGICAL DIVISIONS OF THE SUBJECT

The classification here suggested is four-fold. First, we have those writings or records of human thought which are permanently valuable, but valuable by reason of some specific or technical importance. Examples are Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Newton's *Principia*, or Darwin's *Origin of Species* — works which necessarily appeal to a lim-

ited and special class. In the second class, we have such works as possess a general human interest and value, but an interest and value dependent chiefly upon the practical importance of their subject-matter. Typical examples of this class are the standard histories and biographies — works not remarkable for greatness of style or spirit, but still of general and popular interest. The third class includes those writings which have a practical purpose and value, but which also possess a certain distinction of manner and are marked by certain qualities that make them interesting independently of their thought value. In this class we shall find such works as Macaulay's *Essays* and Carlyle's *French Revolution* — the productions of the great masters of prose style. The fourth class comprises those writings whose dominant purpose is, not to instruct or inform, but to move the soul by their impressiveness, beauty, and power. Here are included all the great masterpieces of poetry, drama, and fiction.

Works of the fourth class have all of the essential excellences of the other three classes:

they are permanently valuable ; they are valuable not to the few, but to mankind ; they have the requisite distinction of manner. In addition, they have the peculiar purpose and spirit which give them greater power and vitality. Works of the third class are permanently valuable and valuable to mankind in general ; and they possess in common with works of the fourth class a value that is more than merely practical. The second class resembles the third and fourth only in its general human interest. It has, of course, the permanent value of the first class, and in even greater measure. The first class has, in common with the others, only the fact of permanent value. It will thus appear that each successive class gathers into itself the excellences of each preceding class, and adds to them something by which it rises to a higher degree of power and value.

Definitions of literature have varied largely as they included or excluded some one or more of these classes ; and there is, perhaps, no sufficient argument against applying the term to any of them. The divisions them-

selves are the important matter; and these are real and inherent, whatever terms we may use. The application of the word literature is, then, to some extent, a matter of choice and expediency; but, as we have only one term for at least four different things, and as the validity of our criticism largely depends upon a definite use of terms, the question of this application becomes one of considerable importance.

LITERATURE AS A FORM OF HUMAN EXPRESSION

In seeking to reach the most significant and satisfactory conception of literature, we shall avoid arbitrary judgment only as we are guided by some fundamental principle of distinction. Such a principle may be derived from a consideration of literature in its essential character as a form of human expression.

The modes of human expression are exceedingly various; yet they may all be included under the term art. This may not at first sight be apparent; but let us consider. There

are but three things known to us in the world besides God,—nature, the soul, and art. The first two are created directly by God; the third is the product which results from the action of the soul upon nature. Art, in this broadest sense, includes all that man creates, from the lowest to the highest; and just as nature and the soul are the embodiment of God's thought, so art is the embodiment or expression of the thought of man. The soul has no other medium of expression than the nature which it finds about it; and whether it be in the digging of a ditch, the construction of a machine, the utterance of a word, the painting of a picture, or the writing of a poem, man employs nature to embody and convey his thought. Human expression, then, involves art; and literature, as one of the forms of human expression, takes its place among the arts. If, then, we can discover some of the essential characteristics of art, we shall discover some at least of the essential characteristics of literature. Of course we are concerned here only with characteristics that are general and fundamental.

The Characteristics of Art

We have just seen that art is the expression of human thought in terms of nature. This implies that art is concrete. So long as thought remains purely abstract, it must remain in the thinking mind. In order to express the thought, we must embody it by talking, walking, painting, writing — by the use of some concrete form.

Art is not only concrete: it is also ideal. By this is meant that it is the result of imagination. This is true because thought cannot pass directly and immediately into concrete form. We must first create a mental image or ideal of the form in which we desire our thought to be embodied. The thought passes into the ideal, and thence into the outward form. Therefore, all art is the concrete embodiment of an ideal. The two great characteristics of art are, then, ideality and concreteness; and these literature possesses in common with all the other arts, high or low.

As man is made up of body and spirit,

so art divides itself into two great classes corresponding to the ends, practical or spiritual, toward which man's thought is directed. So we make the familiar distinction between practical art and fine art. Practical art has in view the ends of use, while fine art is concerned with the needs of man's higher nature. On the borderland between the two classes there are certain arts, like architecture, which serve both the higher and the lower ends. Indeed, it may well be questioned whether each class does not usually involve some of the purposes and results of the other.

The Object of Fine Art

We have pointed out that practical art ministers to the lower man, while fine art ministers to the higher. The end of practical art is use. What is the corresponding object of fine art? Some would seem to hold that fine art consists simply in the concrete embodiment of the conceptions of man's imagination. Such a view would obliterate the distinction between the higher and lower classes of art; for such an idea of art is as applicable to a

machine as to a poem. The most generally accepted view, and probably the true one, is that fine art appeals primarily to the æsthetic sense, and seeks the end of beauty. There are many, however, who insist that its supreme object is truth. This question we must pause to examine.

The very nature of truth would seem to be a sufficient guarantee that it is not the main purpose of fine art. Truth is the aim of science; and science is the antithesis of art. Truth is didactic; and didacticism is the bane of artistic work. Truth is practical; and fine art seeks ends above the practical. In short, the essential spirit of the artist is utterly at variance with that of the investigator, the teacher, the preacher, the orator, and the man of affairs. Again, truth is an intellectual matter, while art is the product of imagination: truth may find its best statement in abstract terms, while art is essentially picturesque.

It is sometimes asked whether there is not a distinction to be made between the truth of the mere thinker and the truth of the artist — whether there is not, on the one hand, prac-

tical or scientific truth, and on the other, ideal or poetic truth. It may be allowed that truth finds two modes of expression, the scientific and the artistic; and this is perhaps all that the distinction means. What, then, do we mean by ideal truth, or truth artistically expressed? We can hardly mean anything else than truth embodied in an ideal conception of the imagination. Now, if this ideal embodiment of truth be always fine art, then truth may claim to be one at least of the objects of fine art. The fact is, however, that the presentation of truth in ideal forms does not by any means invariably produce artistic work. For instance, we may have an ideal representation of evil and an ideal representation of good; and both of these may equally represent truth. Both, however, are not equally artistic; for no true art can base itself upon the representation of the evil and the ugly. These enter into a work of art; but only for purposes of contrast, to set in brighter relief ideals of goodness and loveliness. Dante's *Inferno* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* do not refute such a view; they furnish rather the

strongest proofs of its validity. *Paradise Lost* is filled with innumerable beauties of detail ; and the great theme which it illustrates is not one that ends in horror and despair, but one that contains the promise of life and eternal salvation. The *Inferno* also has its wonderful beauty as well as its blackness of darkness ; and moreover, it is but part of a larger whole which presents to the human mind the tremendous antithesis between heaven and hell. Conceive either robbed of its beauty, and it would be, not a poem, but a catalogue of infernal horrors. The true type of the genuine work of art is to be found in that famous painting of Raphael in which Michael the archangel stands in triumphant beauty with his foot upon the dragon. The ideal of evil and the ideal of good are both there ; but goodness and beauty are eternally supreme.

It might be further asked whether the artistic value of such works does not, after all, consist in the ideal truth of the relation which is shown to exist between good and evil. No : not in the truth of that relation, but in the beauty of it. In the first place, the relation

may be annulled without destroying the artistic quality. In the second place, if we remove the element of beauty, the work of art is annihilated ; if we remove everything but that, the work of art remains. In Raphael's picture, the dragon alone, as a mere representation of evil and horror, would not be artistic ; with the dragon removed, the angel would still retain all the essentials of art.

The conclusion which seems clear is that so-called ideal truth is not necessarily artistic truth ; and that truth artistically expressed is but another name for truth beautifully expressed. In other words, whether the thing idealized be truth or not, it must, in order to be artistic, serve always the ends of beauty. We are thus led to the view that fine art concerns itself primarily with ideal beauty.

Truth does, however, sustain a very close relation to art ; for no genuine art can exist which violates essential truth. It is none the less true, however, that no genuine art can exist which violates morality. These things are so, not because either truth or morality is the main object of art, but because beauty

is never inconsistent with the highest morality and the highest truth. Beauty and goodness and truth are indissolubly linked together ; or perhaps more truly still, they are simply various manifestations of one and the same great principle. In the physical realm, beauty exists alone ; and here it succeeds in producing art—limited, indeed, but none the less real. In the intellectual realm, beauty coincides with truth ; and in the spiritual realm, with goodness.

Looking at beauty thus broadly, we see that it involves no degradation of art. All beauty is an expression of the infinite. All beauty has power to lead the soul from the simplest forms of merely physical loveliness up to the supreme source and manifestation of beauty in the being of God. Art thus becomes one of the great avenues of approach to the divine ; and beauty becomes a worship as well as a delight.

Literature as an Art

We have already pointed out that literature, as a form of art, possesses ideality and

concreteness. We must now proceed to inquire whether it is a practical art or a fine art, whether it serves the ends of use or the ends of beauty. What we shall find is that literature includes both classes. Like art itself, literature serves either the ends of use or the ends of beauty : it may be divided into practical literature and fine art literature or *belles-lettres*. Here, then, we have a clear distinction between literature in the broad and loose sense and literature in the narrower and stricter sense. In popular usage, it is made to include both practical literature and fine art literature ; but it may also be regarded, in an entirely legitimate sense, as including fine art literature alone. The term literature may fairly be used in this limited sense, just as the word art is used as synonymous with fine art. In this view, literature is one of the fine arts ; and as such, it possesses the three essential characteristics, beauty, ideality, and concreteness.

The arts differ from each other, not in their essential spirit, but in their medium of expression : all the arts seek ideal beauty ; but

each separate art seeks for it a different concrete embodiment. For instance, sculpture finds expression through form; painting, through combination of form and colour; music, through melody and harmony of sounds. Now, the medium through which literature expresses its ideas is human language. It has the advantage over the other arts, in that its medium of expression is the subtlest, the most varied, the most comprehensive known to man. Certain limitations are involved in these advantages; but while literature is inferior to each of the other arts in some particular respects, it goes far toward combining the capabilities of all. As distinguished from the other fine arts, literature is, then, the embodiment of ideal beauty in human speech.

Form and Substance

No theory of literature can be satisfactory which does not take into account so fundamental a matter as the relation between form and substance. If we hold the view that literature is an art, where does the art element

reside? Is it to be found in the subject-matter or in the style? This is an important question. It touches the root of the matter; and upon the answer will depend all our literary conceptions and judgments.

The theory that art quality is independent of substance would almost seem to bear its own refutation. All our modern researches, whether psychological, philological, or literary, tend to emphasize the intimate and necessary dependence of style upon thought—tend even to show that the character of the thought absolutely conditions the form of its expression. Unless these researches are entirely at fault, it would seem to follow that there can be no such thing as artistic quality in style without a certain artistic quality in the substance. To be sure, the same general truth may be presented, now as a philosophical principle and now as the theme of a work of art; but it is begging the question to say that this is merely a difference in form of expression. The change is much more radical and fundamental. It is a difference of conception; the subject-matter itself has un-

dergone a transformation. Art, then, is determined primarily by substance.

On the other hand, however, artistic substance cannot alone constitute a work of art. Form is indispensable ; form will be determined in its character by the thought which it expresses ; and therefore form will necessarily be to some extent artistic. In fine, there is no art until the fit thought—the thought artistically conceived—has found its appropriate embodiment : this appropriate embodiment can only be an artistic form or style ; and so it follows that style, although inferior to matter, must also be regarded as possessing something of the artistic quality. Substance and form are related to each other as soul and body. Each is necessary to the existence of the completed work.

THE SCOPE OF LITERATURE

Art literature will of course include all writings which seek as the main object of their being to set forth artistic substance in artistic form. Some would draw the line at

this point, and say that the purpose of a work, artistic or utilitarian, determines its character as literary or non-literary.

There is, however, a large class of works, evidently not purely artistic in purpose, yet possessing certain qualities which are commonly recognized as literary. It seems best here to regard literature as a mixed art. An author, while seeking utilitarian ends, may, by virtue of his instinct and genius, produce work possessing true artistic quality. If this quality be sufficiently marked, the work may be fairly regarded as literary in result if not in purpose. Such an application of our theory will enable us to include Macaulay, Carlyle, Ruskin, Jeremy Taylor, Swift, Burke, and many others who must else be regarded as non-literary. No hard and fast line can be drawn in this middle ground. Much must be left to individual taste and judgment. The guiding principle involved in our general theory will keep us from going too far astray. Our conception of literature will correspond closely with De Quincey's distinction between the literature of knowledge and

the literature of power. It will include primarily the masterpieces of poetry, drama, and fiction, and secondarily, such other writings as possess real distinction of manner or spirit as the result of certain artistic instincts or qualities in the writer or in the thought. The first and second classes in our fourfold division must be excluded, because the works that belong to them serve exclusively the ends of use. Works of this nature may be called literature in the broad and loose sense; but they surely do not belong to that art literature which alone possesses life and power and immortality.

THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF LITERATURE

Question is often raised concerning the possible subjects with which art literature may deal. In spite of weighty opinion to the contrary, we may declare that the range is practically infinite. Subjects differ greatly as to their artistic capabilities; but no one can safely predict where the artist will find limits set to his power of discerning and creat-

ing ideal beauty. Genius has so often overpassed the barriers of theory that we may well hesitate to declare of any subject that it does not possess the capabilities for great literature.

There are those who say that the subject-matter of literature is humanity alone. This is the implication of Matthew Arnold's famous saying that literature is "a criticism of life." When we analyze the theory, we see that it means substantially this: that even when literature seems to be dealing with other subjects, it is really dealing with man's relation to those subjects, and so ultimately with man himself. This is juggling with words, and does not make any real distinction. All that can be fairly claimed is that literature deals only with those subjects that have interest and significance for man. The artist must begin from the human centre, because he himself is human, and humanity is the subject that he knows most about. He need not stop here, however, but may go on to express in artistic creation his thought and feeling about all subjects outside of himself.

The subject-matter of literature may be included under six general heads: (1) God, (2) The Spiritual World, (3) Man, (4) Human Life, (5) Nature, (6) Art. Literature has to do with angels, demons, and other spiritual creatures; and in order to separate our thought concerning the supreme being from our thought concerning spiritual matters outside of God, the two first divisions are suggested. The term Man is meant to denote the human soul in its essential nature; the term Human Life, to denote the soul's external activities and relations. Nature denotes the physical creation of God; Art denotes the creations of man. The practical convenience of these divisions, in literary study, will be their sufficient justification.

CHAPTER II

THE KINDS OF LITERATURE

THE manifestations of literature are as various as the thoughts and emotions of the human soul which is its creator. In some sense, every great literary work is of its own kind and has no companions. Still, it is possible to note certain broad divisions and to point out their distinguishing characteristics.

PROSE AND VERSE

This common and familiar division of literature is often spoken of with contempt as superficial and meaningless. It ought not, however, to be so summarily discarded. It is true, indeed, that the distinction is primarily one of form; but distinctions of form are often significant, if not vital. The various arts differ from each other chiefly in form,

their spirit and purpose being essentially the same. The fact that many works combine both forms does not furnish any valid objection; for, on whatever basis we make our division, we shall still find a similar mingling of classes in particular works.

The distinction of form is in itself a serviceable one; but it implies differences that are deeper and more vital. Certain differences in spirit correspond with the difference in form. Broadly speaking, verse includes the higher, purer, and more typical kinds of literature—those which most clearly and directly seek the ends of ideal beauty; while prose includes the lower and less artistic kinds—those in which the pursuit of ideal beauty is most likely to be mixed with practical and utilitarian aims. Note the ill success of didactic poetry, showing how inappropriate is verse for unartistic ends. On the other hand, note the success of the novel of purpose, showing that prose, even in its most imaginative forms, lends itself very readily to practical uses. There is nothing surprising in all this. Prose is the language of common life,

the language of business and of use. It is only at a comparatively late stage of development that literature begins to use it as a medium of expression; and it is altogether natural that the use of the more practical form of speech should be almost inseparably connected with something of practical purpose and spirit. On the other hand, verse is the natural and universally accepted medium for the expression of the soul's highest thought, feeling, and imagination; and it is almost inevitable that these loftier moods will seek this more artistic form of expression. It is interesting to note that, as thought and feeling rise and expand, the prose form of speech tends to approach more and more nearly to verse.

If it be asked why verse is thus linked with the higher mood and with the more purely artistic purpose, the reason is not far to seek. Verse is rhythmical language; and lofty human thought and strong human feeling tend naturally to a rhythmical utterance. All the deep passions of the human heart tend to voice themselves in song until they

reach a point where nothing is possible but broken ejaculation or that silence which is more eloquent than any speech. Rhythm, moreover, is a great essential element of music; and in the use of verse, literature borrows the mysterious but potent influence of the subtlest and purest and most spiritual of its sister arts.

From the foregoing, it should be clear that the distinction between prose and verse has more significance than might at first be supposed. The difference in form, taken together with the spiritual differences implied, ought to be sufficient to justify the division of literature into poetry on the one hand, and non-poetical or prose literature on the other. In asserting that the difference between poetry and other literature lies in its use of rhythmical speech, we are, as has been shown, implying differences that are not only real but profound.

THE GREAT LITERARY IMPULSES

We shall find it serviceable to set aside for the moment our previous classification, and to

divide literature on the basis of certain great impulses that have led to its creation. By this means, we shall find ourselves arriving finally at certain great types of literature, common to both prose and poetry, though varying to some extent according as they are written in the higher form or the lower.

All literature is the result of four great art impulses. These are: the impulse to narrate events, either real or imagined; the impulse to express the subjective thought and emotion of the writer; the impulse to portray human life and character; and the impulse to describe objects, either real or imagined, either material or spiritual. If it be objected that this list is incomplete, the only answer lies in an appeal to literature itself. If other impulses appear, they ought of course to be included; but investigation seems to show that all actual literary works can be classified as resulting from some one or more of the impulses here noted. These impulses have been at work in literature from the beginning; and, in all probability, they will continue, without increase or de-

crease, to the end. The particular forms in which they have manifested themselves have been almost infinitely diversified, the purposes that have worked in harmony with them have been no less various; but still, in one or another of these directions, literary activity has always moved. Here, as elsewhere, we see that which is simple in principle working out to that which is multitudinous in detail. When a new literary form is created, it is by the use of these same elements in new ways. When prose takes its place as a medium of literary expression, it is moved by the same instincts that have been creating poetry for thousands of years. These four fundamental impulses furnish a basis for four different types of literary work. These four types may be called the Narrative, the Subjective, the Dramatic, and the Descriptive.

Narrative Literature

Narrative seems, in almost all literatures, the first type to be fully developed. The *Iliad*, the *Æneid*, the *Divina Commedia*, the

Chanson de Roland, the *Nibelungen Lied*, the *Eddas* and *Sagas* of the north, and the *Beowulf* are, perhaps, sufficient examples of what is familiar to all students of literature. This type, moreover, has been wonderfully vital and fruitful; and it is an essential feature of the chief literary form of our own time. There surely can be no doubt that the narrative form of literature is rightly classed as one of the great literary types.

Subjective Literature

Man is first attracted by the action which he sees going on around him in the actual world, or which his fancy pictures as taking place beyond his immediate vision; and he produces the narrative of events and outward experiences. He then begins to be conscious of his own inner life, and is seized by the impulse to give literary expression to his own thoughts and feelings. He sorrows, he joys, he fears, he hopes, he laments, he exults; and as a result of his genius, conscious or unconscious, all of these moods find

expression in artistic form. The world's literature is full of noble poetry and prose which are the direct outcome of the personal life and experience of the writers. Without need of argument, subjective literature most assuredly bears the stamp of its legitimacy as one of the primal literary forms.

Dramatic Literature

With dramatic literature, the case is somewhat different. It follows naturally enough that, when man has become interested in events and in his own personal experiences, he should then be attracted to the study and portrayal of human life as manifested in other men. It is, moreover, beyond any doubt that this dramatic impulse has given birth to a vast body of the world's greatest literature. The only question is whether dramatic literature is to be considered as a simple type or as a mingling of types.

It is often said that the drama is a compound of the epic and the lyric; and this is practically equivalent to saying that dramatic

literature is simply a union of narrative and subjective literature. It is doubtless a historical fact that the drama did result from the idea of uniting the action of the epic with the musical outburst of the lyric. The outcome, however, is essentially different, in form and in spirit, from either of the older types. The element of action is borrowed from the epic ; but the interest is transferred from the deed to the actor. The drama does not incorporate the epic into itself, but simply borrows the element of action, which it handles in an entirely different way and uses for entirely different purposes. In short, we are dealing no longer with literature of the purely narrative type, but with literature whose supreme purpose is the portrayal of life and character.

The lyric element in drama is very plainly seen in the Greek choruses ; and in one form or another, it has appeared in many dramas, ancient and modern. It is not, however, absolutely essential to the existence of the drama ; and where it exists, it does not alter the character of the drama as a distinct literary type. In

the strict sense, the so-called lyric element in the drama may not be subjective at all, for it represents the thought and feeling of the fictitious characters rather than the personal thought and feeling of the writer. Indeed, such poetry is the very opposite of subjective ; for the writer is giving an objective representation of something outside of himself rather than an expression of his own personality. What is true of chorus or song is even more emphatically true of dialogue. We thus see that, as dramatic literature, in borrowing from the epic, transfers the interest from the event to the actor, so, in borrowing from the lyric, it transfers the interest from the writer himself to the objective character whom he is portraying.

We have, therefore, in dramatic literature, a new and distinct type, and one which does not owe its essential characteristics to any other type or combination of types. The fact that epic and lyric have in some sense contributed to the drama is no more significant than the undoubted fact that epic and lyric often involve something of characterization. In dra-

matic literature, the epic and lyric elements are entirely subordinated to the portrayal of life, just as in the epic, portrayal of life is subordinated to the narration of events, and as in the lyric it is limited to an expression of the author's own personal character.

Descriptive Literature

Logically, this should have been mentioned second; for it is probable that the instinct for describing objects follows closely upon the instinct for narrating events. It has been left till the last, however, because its status as a literary type is somewhat peculiar. The claim is made that such a thing as descriptive literature is a misnomer. No one doubts that there is a great deal of description in literature; but it is argued that description is always subordinate to some other type, and that no literary work exists which can be called predominantly descriptive in purpose or effect. This latter claim may be true; for it certainly is difficult, if not impossible, to find any true literary work in which the descriptive element is unmistakably dominant.

It does not follow, however, that the descriptive type of literature has no existence. The impulse is there; the results are there; and these make the type. If no representative works can be found, then we have the singular phenomenon of a great literary type manifesting its power and nature only by diffusing description throughout all other literary types both in poetry and in prose. In this modified and somewhat peculiar sense, the descriptive type of literature may be said to exist and to claim a place in any theoretical classification of literary types. We cannot ignore it; for the evidences of its power are everywhere apparent in this subordinate form. Then again, there is at least the remote possibility that description may become actually in literature what it already is theoretically and potentially.

The state of things here noted is peculiar; but it is not hard to account for. The simple fact is that the natural limitations of language are antagonistic to description. Description belongs primarily to the painter and the sculptor. They can reproduce objects almost

to perfection, while the artist in words can reproduce only dimly and unsatisfactorily. It is, then, both natural and desirable that the writer should confine himself chiefly to the modes of expression best suited to literary art, using description only as a needed help, and leaving its tasks for the most part to his brother artist.

SUBDIVISIONS OF THE VARIOUS TYPES

Our general classification of literature is seen to be a twofold one. First, we have divided horizontally, on the basis of form, into Poetry and Prose. Secondly, we have divided vertically, according to the nature of the literary impulse and method involved, into Narrative, Subjective, Dramatic, and Descriptive. As we have already intimated, the several literary types are common to both the higher and the lower forms of literature, but are subject to certain variations according as they are written in verse or prose. The difference in the medium of expression has brought with it other differences, both in form and spirit. There are no hard and fast

lines, for literature of the same name and class is to be found in both prose and verse. The drama is an excellent example: it is written now in verse, now in prose, and now in a combination of both. This mingling of classes is only what we might expect. The artist is intent upon the accomplishment of his purpose, and boldly makes all possible combinations of substance and form without much regard to the theoretical harmony of the various elements. The great literary impulses are at work in the creation of all literature, manifesting themselves and producing their results without special care to keep those results simple and typical. Consequently, it is not possible to make two well-defined and mutually exclusive classes of each type on the basis of the verse or prose form of expression. We can, however, note certain classes of literature that may stand as representative of the poetic and prose forms of the various types. Recognizing these characteristic forms as typical representatives rather than as distinct subdivisions, we shall find it of value to set them before us.

Turning first, then, to the narrative type, we shall find that the typical representative of its verse form is the Epic, and the typical representative of its prose form is the Romance. The term epic has a restricted meaning in which it is applicable only to such works as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. It is used here, however, to denote all poetry in which narrative is the distinctive feature. This broader meaning is justified by modern usage, and also by the fact that narrative is the essential element in the ancient epic. The romance includes all prose works in which narrative clearly predominates over portrayal of life and character.

In subjective literature, the typical verse form is the Lyric, and the typical prose form is the Essay. As to substance and spirit, the lyric is the embodiment of subjective emotion ; as to form, the original conception of it as something to be sung has made it the most varied and musical of all kinds of poetry. The essay is the expression of the personal thought and feeling of its author ; and both in subject and form, it has great variety. As

compared with the lyric, it tends more toward thought and less toward emotion.

The typical poetic form of dramatic literature is the Drama; and the typical prose form is the Novel. The typical drama is a combination of plot and characters, both being presented through the medium of dialogue and action, and the treatment of life being predominant. The drama is found both in prose and poetry; but in its original and typical form, it belongs to the latter. The novel differs from the romance as the drama differs from the epic—namely, in combining plot and character, with character as the leading feature. It differs from the drama in its use of direct narration. It is distinctly a prose type, although such a thing as a novel in verse is not altogether unknown.

We have seen that descriptive literature is rightly to be regarded as one of the great literary types; but that, in all probability, its only results are to be found in description diffused throughout the other literary types and subordinate to them. Inasmuch, then, as the descriptive type has produced no strictly

representative works, it is of course impossible to note any typical classes. Description appears in both forms of expression, and we may therefore speak of descriptive poetry and descriptive prose; but we cannot be more definite. We are, indeed, familiar in poetry with the term idyl; but it is not desirable to use this, since it denotes simply a poem in which the descriptive element is large, but not necessarily predominant.

The classification here suggested may be represented as follows:

	Narrative	Subjective	Dramatic	Descriptive
<i>Poetry</i> .	Epic	Lyric	Drama	Descriptive Poetry
<i>Prose</i> . .	Romance	Essay	Novel	Descriptive Prose

This analysis may be said to represent fairly the classification of literature on natural principles and by a logical method. A more minute classification would not be in place here; for a consideration of the various kinds of epic, lyric, drama, etc., belongs rather to the study of those classes of litera-

ture. It is sufficient for us to have noted here the great varieties of literature, which represent its essential forms and fundamental instincts. Beyond this, we shall find that literary art emphasizes its liberty and blossoms out into that infinite variety of detail which is characteristic of all life.

CHAPTER III

THE SUBSTANCE OF LITERATURE

IN the study of all literature, there are two fundamental objects of consideration — namely, substance and form. They are so indissolubly linked together that they are separable only in thought and for purposes of analysis. Yet each has its own realm ; and by considering each separately, we shall gain a more complete knowledge of both. We shall here consider them from the point of view of the artist rather than of the critic, and shall follow the order in which they may be supposed to manifest themselves in the evolution of a literary work. It will be clear, from this point of view, that substance naturally comes before form. The order of the various elements of substance will appear as we proceed.

THOUGHT

The outward form of all art is but the symbol of something that is inward and spiritual. This inward something we have found appearing invariably as ideal beauty, the result of the soul's emotion, imagination, and volition. These powers of the soul, however, are only secondary. The ultimate fact of consciousness is thought; and without a beginning of thought, it is impossible for the soul to manifest itself in any way whatever. So, behind every conception of ideal beauty, every act of feeling or imagination or will, must lie something of pure thought. It follows that the substance of every literary work is, in the last analysis, a substance of thought. This abstract thought may possibly not be discernible in the completed work; the picture produced by imagination may seem to be very far removed from the abstract; but the thought must be there, latent if not apparent. If we fail to perceive it, it is because our insight is at fault, or perhaps because the artist failed to give his thought adequate

expression. That the analysis of the critic will always be able, in a subtle and complicated work like one of Shakspeare's dramas, to set down the abstract thought in precise and adequate terms is not altogether certain. Some approach to such a result may, however, be made; and even if the endeavours of the greatest critics should prove unsatisfactory, nothing would be shown except the insufficiency of the critical faculty before the work of the great artist. We may be assured by the very laws of mind that the thought is there, whether we find it or not. God has involved his thought in nature and in the human soul; and man is still spelling out that thought slowly and painfully. He can never hope to grasp completely the divine meaning; yet he does not count the effort vain or conclude that there is no thought underlying the apparent facts of the universe. So the master artist has involved his meaning in the creations of his genius; and the fact that we fail to understand him fully does not prove that our study is without value or show that the work is devoid of

thought. In the one case, the finite is trying to comprehend the infinite; in the other, the smaller mind of the critic is trying to interpret the symbol which hides while it expresses the thought of the great artistic genius.

Every great literary work will have its central thought or theme. Without this, there is no unity; and without unity, there is no true art. It may be difficult to reduce this thought to an abstract proposition; but nevertheless, in its essential features, it should be fully and clearly revealed. Often this central thought may be all that is apparent; but usually it will be possible to note at least its general parts, aspects, or bearings. Sometimes it is possible to follow a whole course of ordered thought. In many cases, the concreteness of the expression will prevent this detailed examination of thought in the abstract; and in any case, minuteness of analysis will of course depend upon the nature, importance, and difficulty of the thought. As the examination of thought is made more and more minute, it becomes at last simply a study of the meanings and relations of words.

Here we pass imperceptibly from the study of thought to the study of style. This only emphasizes anew the close relation between substance and form.

EMOTION

The substance of literature is not alone a substance of thought; it is also a substance of emotion. Without some degree and kind of passion, no literature is possible; for thought, untouched by feeling, remains cold and lifeless. Emotion is needed to quicken imagination into creative activity; for without the impulse of emotion, imagination remains inert. Passion, therefore, is important in art, not only for its own sake, but also for the life and power which it imparts to the creative faculty.

The presence of emotion in a literary work is a matter that needs no demonstration. The emotional element does not, however, fully reveal itself to the superficial reader. It becomes infinitely greater and more significant as our study becomes more careful and sym-

pathetic. We cannot analyze passion as we can analyze thought. Our study must be largely in the nature of observation; but this observation may be critical and penetrating. Its results may not be very definite or systematic; but they will be none the less valuable in revealing the power of emotion in life and in art.

A dominant emotion will usually correspond with the central thought, thus adding unity of spirit to unity of purpose. Where two or more leading emotions are coördinate, they must be so related that the unity of the work is not destroyed. There is also likely to be a variety of minor or subordinate emotions. In different works, these will of course vary in number, in nature, and in degree of intensity. Where they are numerous or subtle, observation may follow them in detail. Here, again, we should find ourselves passing from substance to form; for the relation of expression to thought is not more vital than its relation to emotion.

The emotions in a work sustain peculiar and significant relations to each other. They

also arise from certain causes and produce certain effects. So far as these matters may be revealed, they are necessary to our full knowledge of emotion.

Again, emotion may be subjective or objective. It should be subjective in lyric or essay, and objective in other literature. Often, however, we find the personality of the artist intruding itself into naturally objective work. This cannot be ignored ; for it vitally affects the character and value of the production. It may be well to note here that subjectivity and objectivity are so liable to mixture and confusion because they are after all only relative. It is impossible utterly to eliminate the artist from his work ; and so all literature is to some extent subjective. What we call objective literature is simply literature in which the subjective element is reduced to a minimum. The practical test of objectivity is that the artist shall be so far hidden as to be practically forgotten in the contemplation of his work. This power of self-effacement is a mark of the highest artistic genius. The distinction between subjective and objective

is of special importance here because it is chiefly in connection with emotion that the consideration of these elements enters into literature.

IDEALITY

Neither thought nor emotion possesses in itself any literary or art quality; for they are real or experiential elements, while art is an ideal product. It is only when they are acted upon by imagination that we begin to have a result that can be called truly artistic. Here, then, we have another element in the substance of literature, the element of ideality. With this element, we see art quality appearing in the conception before that conception begins to take on its appropriate outward form. The picture exists in the mind of the artist before it can be transferred to the canvas or embodied in language.

Ideality is that part of literary substance which is the product of imagination. It is by no means easy to define; for imagination is infinitely subtle and versatile in its proc-

esses and effects. Perhaps it may be best illustrated by means of the physical senses. Imagination produces pictures and sounds, and thus appeals to the senses of sight and hearing. Upon this fact most of the arts are based; and arts differ as they appeal to one or the other sense. Typical illustrations are painting and music. Literature appeals to both of these senses, and thus combines the functions of the other arts. It is commonly supposed to stop here; but if we consider closely, we shall see that imagination in literature appeals to the other senses as well. We sit down to luscious banquets; we are fanned by cooling breezes; we inhale the odours of meadow and forest. It will of course be understood that this appeal is not a literal one: we see, hear, taste, feel, smell, only in imagination. This fact implies that our illustration is after all imperfect; for the senses of the imagination can apprehend infinitely more than the physical senses. Imagination can see "the light that never was, on sea or land." It knows that "heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter." It

apprehends the spiritual as well as the material, the eternal as well as the temporal. It is all of this marvellous creation that we include under the term ideality. It is more easy to experience than to understand. As with emotion, our knowledge of it comes by observation rather than by analysis.

Corresponding with central thought and dominant emotion, a literary work may have what we may call a main ideal conception. This is usually the imaginative embodiment of the leading thought and emotion. It is related to them as concrete to abstract. By such a process as this, the poet "gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name." Sometimes the main conception will have various parts or aspects, corresponding usually to different phases of the leading thought and emotion. Then, too, there are likely to be many minor conceptions appearing here and there throughout the work. The relation of these to each other, to the main conception, and to the thought and emotion, is an important matter of consideration. Sometimes a work is ideal only in its minor parts. The

central thought has been allowed to remain in its abstract form, while imagination has worked only upon the subordinate thoughts. No special difficulty is presented in such a case. We need simply to recognize the facts and interpret the work accordingly.

As we follow ideality more and more into detail, we approach the meeting point of conception and form ; for the minor evidences of ideality are best seen in their outward manifestations, as in epithets, figures of speech, and the like. The tendency to pass at this point from substance to form is most natural ; for the function of the imagination in art is to prepare the abstract for expression in the concrete. In a word, idealization is the process by which we pass from a proposition to a poem ; and it has its relations to substance on the one side and to form on the other. As we have seen, however, we may observe this process before it has reached the final stage : we may consider ideality not only in its outward manifestations, but also as an inward conception. It is with the latter, of course, that we are here concerned.

The outward evidences of ideality belong to the study of form rather than of substance.

Ideality implies reality ; for experience must provide real material for imagination to transmute into ideal forms. This real or experiential element must, then, exist in every literary work ; and we must take this element into account in order to understand how much is truly the work of imagination. It would be impossible to enumerate all the realities that undergo the idealizing process ; for they are as manifold as the facts of nature and of life. We have already implied that thought and emotion constitute a real element. This is true because the writer can embody no thought and can represent no feeling which he has not found in his own experience or in the experience of other men. Imagination does not create new thoughts and emotions ; it simply idealizes those that life and experience have already furnished. Even in dramatic work, the author can attribute to his creatures no thought and feeling that are not suggested by his experience of life. Besides thought and emotion, innu-

merable other realities furnish material for artistic work. Real persons, objects, incidents, etc., are taken up and idealized by imagination. History and observation are constantly contributing to the purposes of the artist. There is no ideal conception, however wild and fanciful, which has not in some sense a foundation in reality. The real element in art is the marble as it comes from the quarry, the paint as it lies upon the palette; the ideal element is added when creative genius has transformed the block and the colours into statue and picture. The artist does not create his materials: for these, he must go to the great storehouse of nature. Yet he does most truly create that into which the materials are shaped.

BEAUTY

Literary substance necessarily involves the element of beauty. We have already seen that this is the great end and object of literature as a fine art. The three great processes, thought, emotion, and imagination, must

reach this result, or they have laboured in vain. All beauty, however, is not artistic. Beauty may be either real or ideal ; and as the real has no art quality, it is only ideal beauty that is truly a literary element. It follows that we must discriminate between the beauty which is real and the beauty which is ideal : the former is the product of nature ; the latter alone is the creation of the artist. It is with ideal beauty, therefore, that we are here chiefly concerned.

In the study of all art, we need to beware of supposing that a merely intellectual analysis will exhaust all that the work contains. Nowhere is this caution more necessary than in considering the element of beauty. Like emotion and ideality, it is to be felt and seen rather than analyzed. It may be possible to make some analysis that is worth while ; and the results of that analysis will be about all that we can formulate and display. Yet it must always be freely recognized that beauty is to be spiritually discerned, and that the best results of study may be over and above all analysis. As to what is

beautiful, we must perhaps make our last appeal to the æsthetic nature. For all practical purposes, there will probably be essential agreement among all people of educated taste.

Beauty should appear first of all in the main ideal conception of a work. Wherever else it might be lacking, we should expect to find it there ; for if ideal beauty be the supreme object of art, the total and final effect of a true art creation can hardly be otherwise than beautiful. Beauty will appear also in minor ideal conceptions throughout the work. Not all of these will necessarily be beautiful ; but beauty, on the whole, will predominate. In the search for beauty, we may go on to observe the minute details of the work. Here, again, we may easily pass into the realm of form ; for while beauty exists in ideal conceptions, it also exists in outward expression. It may be suggested that there is beauty also in the thought, in the emotion, and in the various objects idealized. There is beauty in all of these ; but it is real beauty and not ideal.

Beauty is of three kinds, — physical, intellectual, and spiritual. The greatness and

power of a work will depend upon the kind of beauty as well as upon the amount and degree of intensity. So far, then, as we may determine the kind of beauty involved, we shall come to a better understanding and appreciation of a work of art. Our estimation of beauty involves an appreciation of its amount and intensity, a true judgment of its essential character, and a perception of all the lights and shadows which give to the creations of genius their vividness and power. We shall have gained a higher end than any of these, if we shall feel the thrill of its power upon our souls.

The beautiful in a work of art very often implies the unbeautiful. Imagination may and does create ideals of ugliness and horror as well as ideals of beauty. The unbeautiful element may also be increased by the realities that enter into any particular work. It is only the beautiful, however, that is artistic ; and so, in an examination of literary elements, we must separate the work into its beautiful and unbeautiful parts. The unbeautiful has its proper place in literature ; for the great

law of contrast gives to it a certain artistic function in helping to exalt and glorify the beautiful.

It will be evident from what has been said as to the relations between the two that no beauty is artistic which is not ideal, and that no ideality is artistic which is not beautiful. This only brings out with more clearness and emphasis the fundamental principle that we have art only when ideality and beauty coincide and produce ideal beauty.

CHAPTER IV

THE FORM OF LITERATURE

THE subject of literary form presents itself in three aspects, — style, metre, and structure. It seems most convenient, and perhaps most logical, to consider these elements of form in the order named.

STYLE

Style is the common and necessary feature of all literature, whether prose or poetry. In considering it as an element of literary form, our chief business is to determine what are the qualities of good style, and to show which of these are distinctively literary in character.

Our general division of the qualities of style is readily and naturally suggested by the several elements of literary substance.

There are certain qualities beyond just correctness of grammar or such that must be looked at before deciding

what is good style

There are certain qualities of style that correspond ^{These} closely with the element of thought; and these ^{there are} may be called the intellectual qualities of style. There are other qualities that correspond with the element of emotion; and these may be called the emotional qualities of style. There are other qualities that correspond with the element of ideality; and these may be called the imaginative qualities of style. There are still other qualities that correspond with the element of beauty; and these may be called the æsthetic qualities of style. Our fourfold division of the qualities of style is, then, into Intellectual, Emotional, Imaginative, and Æsthetic. Incidentally, it offers a striking illustration of the intimate relation between substance and form.

It is necessary now to consider the significance of these several classes, and to observe the relation of each to what is purely artistic in style. As a means to this end, we shall note the specific qualities that belong to each class, shall observe their relations to each other, and shall seek to indicate their character as literary or extra-literary.

Intellectual Qualities

The intellectual qualities of style are Correctness, Clearness, and Simplicity. It perhaps goes without saying that a literary style must possess grammatical and rhetorical correctness. No one would think, however, of attributing literary quality to a style that was merely correct. As to the other two qualities, there may be some difference of opinion; but it is probable that the same principle will hold. That thought should be expressed with lucidity and simplicity is certainly a virtue; but if a writer should stop there, his productions would hardly be ranked as works of literary art. Moreover, though clearness and simplicity are eminently desirable in literature, they have not always been deemed indispensable. We are led, then, to the conclusion that the intellectual qualities, although they may form a true basis for literary style, are not in themselves artistic.

Emotional Qualities

It is probable that every change of emotion has its corresponding effect on style. We

cannot, however, note a specific quality of style for each and every emotion, or even for those few emotions that are most common and striking. In particular instances, it may be possible to note the definite effects of special emotions; but we cannot derive from these effects any general principles. The most that we can do is to note certain general classes of emotions, and to point out their characteristic qualities of style.

There is one emotional quality of style which has been universally recognized: it has been variously designated as force, energy, strength, etc. The term used is not very material; but probably the word strength is the most general and comprehensive. Strength is of all degrees and varieties, from animation to sublimity. We may include all under the general term, leaving the kind and degree of strength to be noted in any particular case. Usually strength has been the only emotional quality of style that has been clearly recognized; but it has been very justly pointed out that all of the effects of emotion upon style cannot be denoted by this term. The

various kinds of strength result from those active emotions which in some measure agitate or excite. Literature, however, appeals also to the passive side of our nature through the expression of the gentler and softer emotions. The best term yet suggested to denote the resulting quality of style is *pathos*. The word is primarily applicable to the emotion itself rather than to the style; and etymologically, it includes emotion of all kinds. Common modern usage, however, justifies its application to style and its restriction to the tender emotions. There is yet a third class of emotions, typically represented by wit and humour. To the resulting quality of style has been given the name of the *ludicrous*. The word denotes that which is sportive or playful, that which is calculated to excite laughter: it may therefore be applied to style as well as to emotions and ideas. It seems probable that all possible emotional qualities of style may be included under *Strength*, *Pathos*, and the *Ludicrous*. The last two of these terms are somewhat unsatisfactory; but terms are merely a means to an end.

It will perhaps be generally agreed that mere strength of style does not imply any claim to literary merit. If there is any doubt about pathos or the ludicrous, it is because these are so commonly accompanied by distinctively literary qualities that they seem to be literary themselves. They do not, however, when standing alone, possess any art quality. A writer may excite our tears or our laughter and yet be entirely realistic, practical, and unliterary. The emotional qualities of style, then, like the intellectual, are in themselves devoid of artistic excellence. Perhaps necessary as a basis for literary style, the intellectual and emotional qualities need the addition of something else in order to transmute style into literature.

Imaginative Qualities

The result of imagination in literary substance is ideality. How, then, does imagination manifest itself in language? Clearly, first, in concrete forms of speech; for imagination uses language to embody and convey

its conceptions. It does more than this, however: it imparts to language a power to kindle the imagination of the reader to an independent activity—a power to suggest what it can never convey. The imaginative qualities of style, then, are Concreteness and Suggestiveness. What ideality is to literary substance, these are to literary form. To a certain extent, all language is concrete, since it appeals to the senses; but we recognize that some forms of speech are relatively more concrete than others, and it is to these that the term is here applied. By a concrete style, then, is meant a style that appeals vividly to the imagination instead of confining itself to those comparatively abstract forms of speech that appeal chiefly to the intellect. This concreteness manifests itself principally in two ways. Language may be pictorial, as in the use of epithets, tropes, figures, etc. It may also have power to convey sound from the imagination of the writer to that of the reader. It appeals, then, to the sense of sight and the sense of hearing. It is at best doubtful whether language has the

concrete power to convey anything directly to any of the other senses. Here, however, comes in the power of suggestion. It is one of the mysteries of speech, one of the secrets of genius. By virtue of its history, its associations, its subtle relations to ourselves and to the poet, a word has meaning infinitely beyond its dictionary definition. As a common flower can call tears to the eyes and visions of childhood, so the simplest word may have power to make us conceive the poet's ideal world far beyond any powers of the artist to demonstrate. Suggestiveness, therefore, is that quality of style by which the writer makes us see and understand what he can never really say. It gives greater vividness to the picture, greater distinctness to the sound. It enables the writer to appeal also to those other senses which are so difficult to reach through language. It leads the soul out to spiritual visions and celestial harmonies. It transcends all analogies drawn from the world of sense. It will be readily apparent that the imaginative qualities of style involve real artistic excellence.

Æsthetic Qualities

Beauty of style appeals chiefly to the ear, and is allied to the beauty of music. Style presents no beauty to the other senses, except as it conveys beautiful conceptions. This, however, is a matter of substance and not of style. The musical qualities of style are melody and harmony. By melody is meant the agreeable succession of sounds, the pleasing modulation of language. Harmony has a double significance. It implies first a concord between sound and sense. It is also used to denote the internal concord of sound with sound, of word with word, of phrase with phrase, of sentence with sentence. Melody and harmony are unquestionably æsthetic qualities of style. Taste has been suggested as a third quality. Taste, however, would seem to be clearly a characteristic of the writer or the reader, and not of the style. Style may contain evidences of taste; but these are not taste itself. What is meant by taste as a quality of style is that style should be in accord with the writer, the subject, the occa-

sion, the sensibilities of the reader, etc., and thereby commend itself as perfectly fit and appropriate. Style undoubtedly possesses such a quality ; and it must just as clearly be regarded as æsthetic. This quality of exquisite appropriateness may be denoted by the word propriety. The term is of course used here in its broad and untechnical sense. We may say, then, that the æsthetic qualities of style are Melody, Harmony, and Propriety.

The æsthetic qualities of style are of course artistic. We may even assert that no style is truly literary which is not in some degree beautiful. From a rhetorical point of view, beauty is the least important of the great qualities of good prose style ; from a purely literary point of view, beauty is the essential characteristic of all style, whether in prose or poetry. Rhetoric may not insist too strongly on the beautiful in style, because beauty is beyond the reach of rules and teaching. Literary criticism seeks for and delights in beauty most of all, because it recognizes the beautiful as the inevitable outcome of the artistic soul, the perfect flower of human thought and expression.

METRE

The most general form in which this subject presents itself is that of rhythm. In the broadest sense of the word—as denoting the regular recurrence or alternation of motion, impulse, or sound—rhythm prevails throughout all nature. It is a physical characteristic of human speech, the natural expression of lofty emotion. It does not make poetry artificial or merely external; it simply allies it with what is most spontaneous and exalted in human utterance. As an element of poetic form, rhythm appears in a great variety of ways. It manifests itself in the parallelism of Hebrew poetry and in the alliteration and accent of Anglo-Saxon verse, as well as in the more regular forms of classical and modern poetry.

The term metre is applied exclusively to rhythm in language, and particularly to that more regular and measured rhythm which depends upon quantity or accent. In this restricted sense, metre depends upon an alternation of syllables of different character. In

metre of quantity, the alternation is between long and short syllables; in metre of accent, the alternation is between accented and unaccented syllables. Classical metre is a metre of quantity. Modern metre is apparently a metre of accent; but in all good metres, accented syllables are usually long, and unaccented syllables are usually short. There are innumerable and minutely refined distinctions as to the various kinds of metre; but a general division of the subject will answer all practical needs.

The Foot and the Line

A foot is a single group of alternating syllables. It usually consists of one long or accented syllable and one or more short or unaccented syllables. In modern English verse, the number of unaccented syllables does not exceed two. The relative position of the syllables determines the character of the foot. In the two-syllable foot, the unaccented syllable may precede or follow the accented syllable. In the first case, we have

the so-called iambic foot (x'), represented by the word *alóne*; and in the second case, the trochaic foot ($'x$), represented by the word *spléndour*. The three-syllable foot may present three different arrangements: (1) the anapæst ($x\ x'$), represented by the word *understánd*; (2) the dactyl ($'x\ x$), represented by the word *shádwy*; (3) the amphibrach ($x'\ x$), represented by the word *etérnal*. If these five metrical forms be kept firmly in mind, we have a key to the whole of modern English metre. Variations from these types may be regarded as combinations of the different types, or as irregularities due to the omission or addition of syllables. Such combinations and irregularities are not infrequent, especially in free lyric verse. In Anglo-Saxon verse, the number of syllables in a foot is very irregular. The pause, taking the place of the unaccented and sometimes of the accented syllable, plays an important part in versification: it accounts for many seeming irregularities in metre.

The precise nature of accent, it is not easy to define; but it is of interest to note that

verse accent usually corresponds either with word accent or with sentence emphasis. The former of these is practically invariable; but the latter accommodates itself to grammatical structure and to rhetorical effect. Another important matter is the poetical effect of the different kinds of metre. Double rhythm is comparatively slow and stately in movement; triple rhythm, comparatively light and rapid. Iambic metre is sustained and dignified. Trochaic metre is forcible and energetic. Anapæstic metre is swift and vigorous. Dactylic metre is light and graceful. The amphibrach has an easy, swinging movement.

Lines of course vary greatly as to the number of feet they contain; and the difference in length affects seriously the character of the verse. In English verse, the common lines are those of four or five feet. The number of feet in a line seldom exceeds eight. Beyond this point, the effect is cumbersome and prosaic. According to the number of feet, a line is called monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter, heptameter, oc-

tameter. The name of foot and line combined characterizes the verse: as for instance, iambic pentameter.

Rhyme

Rhyme is a common, but not an essential, feature of verse. Where it occurs, it is of course an important metrical element. The main outlines of the subject may be presented very briefly. Verse without rhyme is called blank verse: it may be passed with a mere mention. Rhyme is of three kinds: ordinary, or end-rhyme; alliteration, or beginning-rhyme; and assonance. Rhyme in general is caused by the correspondence in sound of different syllables. In end-rhyme, the middle and final sounds of the syllables correspond, as in *bell* and *tell*. It occurs usually at the ends of lines, but sometimes in other places. In beginning-rhyme, or alliteration, the initial sounds of syllables correspond, as in *light* and *love*. Different initial vowel sounds are regarded as alliterative, as *oar* and *aid*. Beginning-rhyme is usually confined to a single line, whereas in end-rhyme, the rhyming syllables

are usually in different lines. Beginning-rhyme is characteristic of Anglo-Saxon poetry. When we apply the term to modern verse, we have reference to consonant alliteration alone. In assonance, there is a correspondence of vowel sounds, as in *roam* and *float*. The syllables may be in the same line or in different lines: they must not, however, be so far apart that the effect of the correspondence is lost. Occasionally, these three forms of rhyme combine to produce perfect rhyme: in this case, the rhyming syllables are identical in sound.

Metre, like style, has its relations to the various elements of literary substance. With thought, we might suppose its relation to be slight; for metre as such cannot go far in the expression of abstract ideas. The music of metre, however, in the hands of a master, has its logical relations; for it may modulate itself to the proper emphasis and climax of thought in such a way as to harmonize with a perfect elocution. There can be no doubt that metre is closely associated with emotion. Rhythmical utterance is the natural result of

strong feeling; the heart instinctively voices itself in song; music is born of emotion. Metre is also intimately associated with ideality; for it is metre that most effectively reproduces the music which the imagination has conceived. It will also be apparent that metre has much to do with the embodiment and expression of beauty. The æsthetic qualities, melody and harmony, here produce their richest and highest effects: unless poetic style possesses these qualities, metre is but lifeless and mechanical. The study of metre, then, is not alone the study of accents, feet, and lines, but the study of the expression of human thought and feeling through the ideal beauty of musical speech.

STRUCTURE

The term structure is here used to denote the large outline or framework of literary form, rather than those details which are naturally included under style and metre. Structure naturally presents itself last for consideration, because it embodies these de-

tails and unifies them into a complete whole. It is to be observed most definitely and satisfactorily in its connection with the individual work. Few general laws can be stated; and little more can be done in this connection than to indicate the essential facts in regard to certain traditional forms that have established themselves in literary usage. These forms do not rest upon any universal and necessary principles; but they have been found to serve well the purposes of the literary artist, and it is by modifying and combining them that the individual forms have been produced.

The ordinary unit of literary structure is the paragraph. Smaller elements involve principally the problems of style or metre; and it is only as these elements are combined into paragraphs that they concern the structure of the work as a whole. The paragraph appears in poetry as well as in prose. A peculiar and somewhat arbitrary form of poetical paragraph is the stanza. Still another equivalent of the paragraph is the single speech in dialogue. In prose, the component parts of a

paragraph are sentences ; in poetry, sentences and metrical lines. In the prose paragraph, we look for unity of thought ; in the poetical paragraph, also for unity of musical effect.

These units of structure are usually parts of a larger whole. As larger structural elements, we sometimes have sections or other equivalent divisions. These are made up of groups of paragraphs or stanzas. Still larger divisions are chapters and cantos : the former belong to prose and the latter to poetry. Practically equivalent to these are the scenes of the ordinary drama. The yet larger division of a work into books is common to both poetry and prose. The drama has its corresponding division into acts. Few works would involve all of the structural features possible to their class, and sometimes there would be more or less change in the order here indicated ; but this outline will serve to give a general idea of the principal elements of literary structure.

Structure is a matter of outward form ; yet here, as elsewhere, form is merely symbolical of substance. As we may readily

see, structure represents the author's mode of conceiving his thought, his plot, his music, his picture. There is a very true and deep sense in which substance and structure, with all their multitudinous details, unite to form a grand and perfect unity whose end is the complete manifestation of the author's supreme purpose. This larger unity may be called the organic as distinguished from the formal structure of the work. The study of this organic structure is the study of the work as a living whole, in all its elements, both of substance and of form.

GENERAL OUTLINE OF LITERARY ELEMENTS

I. — THE SUBSTANCE OF LITERATURE.

A. — *Thought.*

1. The central thought.
2. The whole course of thought.

B. — *Emotion.*

1. The dominant emotion or emotions.
2. Minor emotions — their number, nature, and intensity.
3. Relations between the emotions.
4. Causes and effects of the emotions.
5. Subjective or objective character of the emotions.

C. — *Ideality.*

1. Main ideal conception.
2. Minor ideal conceptions.
3. Relations of the ideal conceptions to each other and to the thought and emotion.
4. The real element.

D. — *Beauty.*

1. Beauty in the main ideal conception.
2. Beauty in minor ideal conceptions.
3. The kind of beauty — physical, intellectual, or spiritual.
4. The unbeautiful element.

II. — THE FORM OF LITERATURE.

A. — *Style.*

1. Intellectual qualities. —
(a) Correctness.

- (b) Clearness.
- (c) Simplicity.
- 2. Emotional qualities.
 - (a) Strength.
 - (b) Pathos.
 - (c) The ludicrous.
- 3. Imaginative qualities.
 - (a) Concreteness.
 - (b) Suggestiveness. +
- 4. Æsthetic qualities. +
 - (a) Melody.
 - (b) Harmony.
 - (c) Propriety.

B. — *Metre.*

- 1. The kind of metre.
 - (a) The foot.
 - (b) The line.
- 2. Rhyme.
 - (a) End-rhyme.
 - (b) Beginning-rhyme.
 - (c) Assonance.
- 3. Relation of metre to substance.

C. — *Structure.*

- 1. Units of structure.
 - (a) Paragraph.
 - (b) Stanza.
 - (c) Single speech in dialogue.
- 2. Larger elements of structure.
 - (a) Sections.
 - (b) Chapters, cantos, scenes.
 - (c) Books, acts.

PART II

THE STUDY OF THE VARIOUS KINDS OF LITERATURE

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THE order of literary study naturally reverses the order of literary creation. The writer must proceed from substance to form; the reader meets the external form first, and naturally proceeds from the outward to the inward, from form to substance. In the study of form, we shall find it convenient to consider first the general structure, then the metre, and then the style. In the study of substance, it is most natural to begin with the element of beauty, proceed next to the ideal conceptions in which that beauty is manifested, consider next the emotion by which imagination has been inspired, and come lastly to the thought which lies behind all. We shall consider this study as applied

only to the representative classes of literature. The multitude of irregular and mixed forms cannot of course be definitely examined. These, however, need present no serious difficulty ; for general methods of study may be readily adapted to any special work.

CHAPTER V

THE STUDY OF EPIC POETRY

EPIC poetry most naturally concerns itself with humanity; and within this field, it deals with human life rather than with man. With God, it does not often deal in a direct way: it turns our thought to Him chiefly as an overruling Providence, as the disposer of human destiny. With the spiritual world, it is frequently and largely concerned. In many ways, the supernatural is shown to have influence and power over the actions and fate of men; and oftentimes the epic personages are themselves supernatural beings. Nature is not commonly a direct subject: it is usually the background or setting for the action. The epic poets do often show a strong and true feeling for nature; but they give evidence of observation rather than reflection, and the result is good description rather than

profound interpretation. It is only incidentally that art is likely to be the subject of any literature; and it is seldom that the epic has anything to offer us in this direction. Our general conclusion will be that the epic is one of the broadest and most comprehensive forms of literature in its range of subjects.

In methods, as well as in subjects, epic poetry is capable of great variety; but nevertheless, all epic poems are alike in their endeavour to tell a story in poetic form and manner. The chief interest of the epic is, then, an interest in events. Its treatment of these is usually simple and direct; but it is, nevertheless, tolerant of episodes. Most epics tend toward romantic rather than realistic treatment. An epic poem should be eminently objective; for the obtrusion of the author tends to mar the work. The treatment of humanity often introduces a certain dramatic element. As we have seen, the supernatural element may also be large.

The two most notable and most typical forms of epic poetry are the primitive epic and the so-called modern epic. The former is a growth

rather than a creation : the supernatural element is likely to be prominent, and the subject is some great racial myth or tradition. The latter is likewise on the grand scale ; but it is the conscious and somewhat artificial creation of an individual poet. Minor and less typical forms are many and various. The legend recites the deeds of national, historical, or sacred heroes ; but it lacks the large conception and grand style of the typical epic. The allegory deals with events and characters that have a secondary or symbolical meaning : it is so commonly in the narrative form as to be a recognized variety of epic poetry. The fable is usually allegorical in character ; but it deals with beasts, birds, etc., rather than with men. The poetical romance recounts strange and fanciful adventures, and often involves a large admixture of the remote and the supernatural. The ballad is a short popular tale in lyrical form. Poetical stories based upon common life are not infrequent. Humorous stories are of all sorts, from the mock epic to the light tale and the parody.

This classification is not exhaustive, nor are the several kinds mutually exclusive. The division is more or less traditional and familiar; but it has a practical convenience that justifies its use.

THE STUDY OF FORM

Structure

In structure, the epic is peculiar, though not very uniform or regular. The larger epics are commonly divided into books or cantos: sometimes both divisions are found. These divisions are usually determined by the stages of the narrative. Smaller divisions are stanzas or paragraphs. Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is a good example of comprehensive epic structure: the poem is divided into books, the books into cantos, and the cantos into stanzas. Milton's *Paradise Lost* finely illustrates the use of the poetical paragraph: it is also an example of division into books. Where the formal structure is less marked, our analysis must be modified accordingly.

Metre

Comparatively few measures are commonly used; and there is little variation in metre in a given poem. The common epic measure in English is the iambic pentameter: the iambic foot suits the epic stateliness and dignity; and the pentameter line combines the requisite ease and majesty of movement. This measure is usually in blank verse. Very often we have the heroic couplet, which consists of iambic pentameter lines rhymed in pairs. The Spenserian stanza has also been used frequently and with good effect. It is a stanza of nine lines—eight iambic pentameter and one iambic hexameter or Alexandrine—with rhyme order *a b a b b c b c c*. In the ballad there is a freer lyric movement.

Style

The epic follows in general the tendencies of all poetic expression; but some peculiarities are worthy of note. As regards intellectual qualities of style, we may observe

that epic poetry tends to greater simplicity than either drama or lyric. This is natural, for there is a largeness and directness about the typical epic that favours a simple and lucid expression. Then, too, language lends itself easily to the purposes of narrative.

The emotional qualities of style are apt to be less marked in the epic than in other poetry. Lyric and drama can express emotion directly, while the epic usually describes its emotion, as it were, at second hand. The expression of emotion in the epic is likely, therefore, to be less forcible and affecting. Strength is likely to be the principal emotional quality.

The epic has less need than other poetry to make large use of the imaginative qualities of style. Narrative can secure its ends without so much aid from vivid, picturesque, and musical language. There is of course a large imaginative element in the style of every epic poem; but that element is not likely to be so nearly commensurate as in other poetry with the imaginative element in substance, or with the poetical value of the work.

We may also expect to find the epic inferior to the lyric in the æsthetic qualities of style. It will, at least, be less varied and musical. It may, however, have a simple and stately melody of its own, a harmony like that of deep answering unto deep. The melodious sweetness of Spenser and the sublime harmonies of Milton are sufficient evidence of its capabilities.

THE STUDY OF SUBSTANCE

Beauty

In seeking for ideal beauty in the substance of an epic poem, we may naturally begin to look for it in that which is most characteristic of the epic—namely, in the events. We may first consider the plot as a whole, to observe whether there is beauty in the general effect and in the nature of the issue. We may then proceed to the separate events or groups of events and to minor incidents, asking whether the deeds performed and the occurrences related are fitted to impress the reader as beautiful. Then we may turn to

the characters, with the expectation of finding, in their outward form, in their thoughts and relations, in their motives and moods and dispositions, illustrations of the same great force. As to all this beauty, we must ask, not alone whether it exists, but in what it consists. Beauty is not to be analyzed and dissected; but it is to be definitely felt and carefully observed.

We should be alert to discover beauty of every kind and degree. Now it will be the beauty of merely physical loveliness; now it will be the beauty of fine and elevated thought; and again it will be the beauty of spiritual graces and powers. Sometimes we shall find beauty of an humble and retiring type, beauty which it requires the insight of the poet to discover and the genius of the poet to reveal; and sometimes it will be the lofty and supernal beauty which charms and awes the hearts of men. All of these are to be found in epic poetry; and all are to be recognized and appreciated.

Not seldom, in events and characters, in thoughts and emotions, the unbeautiful will

appear. Oftentimes, it is so decided as to create positive aversion and make us shrink in horror and disgust from the pictures presented to the imagination. It may even seem as though the poet had worked only to a result of deformity, ugliness, horror, and despair. We have already learned that the unbeautiful, in a true work of art, must serve always as a foil and contrast to the beautiful. If in any case the unbeautiful is predominant, it is so far a blemish upon the work. Such predominance, however, is usually only apparent; and a deeper insight into the poet's meaning will show beauty to be still supreme. The observance of the underlying principle is of unusual importance here; for in the epic, these seemingly discordant elements are especially likely to appear.

Ideality

It is in the element of ideality that the various classes of literature most clearly show their distinctive peculiarities. That which distinguishes the ideal conception of the epic

from the ideal conception of other literary types is that the epic presents its thought and emotion through the medium of an ordered series of events. The study of the ideal conception of the epic will, then, be the study of a narrative plot. A plot may be defined as a complication of events and characters for the working out of some particular result. The events are of course the most characteristic feature. By characters, we mean here simply the actors or movers of those events: in this sense alone are they to be truly considered a part of the plot. The third element in a narrative plot is the result. This may be as various as the purposes of the artist. Sometimes, it may be the setting forth of some principle or the accomplishment of some practical purpose; more commonly, and more artistically, it will be the manifestation of some phase of history or of life, the illustration of some human experience or destiny, the bringing about of some desired culmination.

The practical study of a plot may well begin with a statement of its result. This

result is the true key to the whole work ; and a definite apprehension of it will help us to understand the meaning and purpose of the various details. Such a statement should be made as brief and comprehensive as possible ; it should also be concrete in form, for we are here studying the product of imagination and not the abstract thought. In thus stating the result, we are defining what is most central in the main ideal conception. A full statement of that conception would involve such facts in regard to the events, the characters, and the result as are absolutely necessary to give us a general and comprehensive idea of what the author has planned and accomplished.

We may then proceed to a study of the development of the plot. Here we must consider the important events, in their true association with the leading characters, and in their proper relation to the final result. This is something more than a mere random recital of the striking points of the story. It implies selection, discrimination, understanding of the relation of parts to the whole. Our

principal task will be to note the various stages of the development. Here the outward structure is an important guide: if the poem is divided into books, cantos, stanzas or paragraphs, etc., these will mark the larger or smaller divisions of the narrative. In addition to this study of the progress of the plot, we must also note the various threads of interest which the author is carrying along, and observe their relation to each other at each important stage. Still again, we must note the effective means by which the author has determined the movement of his plot. True imagination does not work in wilful and arbitrary fashion: it provides reasonable and adequate causes for its effects. It is these causes that are here in question. The beginning of a plot may depend upon a certain condition of affairs existing before the story opens. The direction of its movement at various points will be determined by the introduction of new elements — by new situations, conditions, characters, events, influences, etc. In an epic poem, supernatural intervention is a favourite means of influencing the

course of the action. Sometimes distinctly new elements are introduced to determine the nature of the result ; but as a rule, the best art allows the result to follow naturally and easily from the development, and is averse to the introduction of new forces toward the close of the work. Sometimes we shall find these effective means interwoven as a part of the development ; and sometimes they are more or less external to the plot. In any case, what chiefly concerns us is the nature and extent of their influence upon the action.

Such a study of plot will help toward a reasonably complete apprehension of the author's plan and method. It will enable us to understand the complication of events and characters by which the result has been worked out. It will be seen that our study also involves a consideration of the main ideal conception, of its various parts or phases, and of the principal minor ideal conceptions throughout the work.

After considering the general outline of the narrative plot, it is often worth while to note details of the poet's narrative art. Many

particular incidents have a special interest, whether for their striking dramatic character, their intrinsic beauty or suggestiveness, the skill of their handling, or any other reason. It may be desirable to notice where the author has departed from the natural chronological order of narration, and how he has synchronized his events so as to give them an orderly succession. It may be instructive to dwell upon those arts of contrast, climax, surprise, suggestion, etc., by which an author has given vividness and fascination to his narrative. Episodes, where they occur, should be studied as to their own characteristics and as to the bearing they may have upon the main plot. A common accessory of narration is description : it is important to note the effect of descriptive passages upon the narrative.

Many epic poems present the problem of interwoven plots. The only difficulty is that which arises from the study of a complicated mechanism. The principles involved are simple and easily understood. Each of the several plots may be studied as in the case of a single plot. Beyond this, we have to consider

the union of these plots into the larger whole. First, we may note the result of that union, which is of course the total result of the whole. Then we may study the interweaving process, noting the original grounds of connection between the plots, observing the several steps in the development of the closer relation, and also the means by which each successive step has been brought about. We should consider whether the related plots are coördinate, or whether some one predominates. Episodes are too insignificant and too loosely related to be regarded as separate plots.

The personages in an epic poem may sometimes call for special notice. Where they are true and lifelike portrayals of human character, as in Homer or Chaucer, a dramatic element has in effect been introduced. In such a case, characters are to be studied just as in a true drama. More frequently, however, the characters are mere dream figures, interesting as curious products of the fancy and important chiefly as the movers of events. Much the same is to be said when the characters

are animals, plants, etc., or when they are supernatural. In the latter case, they may have an additional interest as indicating the author's conception of the spiritual world.

The study of plot and characters is for the most part the study of ideality. Associated with this and suggested by it, is the element of reality in the poem. We have pointed out that thought and emotion are real and not ideal: these, however, do not need to receive special examination as real elements, since they are to be the subject of separate study for their own sake. A real element is often to be found in the plot itself. Events and characters may be historical or derived from actual observation. In such a case, the poet is working upon material that is unquestionably real. Again, he may be working upon material that is legendary or mythical, or that has been presented by some previous writer. Here substantially the same problem arises as in the case of historical material. We still ask how much the poet's imagination has transformed his materials: what was imagination in other men is not imagination

in him; and we can credit him only with what he has created. In addition to these larger matters, there will be many details that have been in some way drawn from reality.

The study of such features of a poem will often lead to an examination of certain matters outside of the work itself. We may find it instructive to consider the real local setting of a poem. The historical setting may be so important as to call for some study of historical facts. Still again, where the poet has drawn material from previous writers, it is desirable to make some examination of the original sources of the plot: these may of course be either historical or imaginative. Such a study will often be intrinsically interesting; but its main purpose is to help us in estimating the poet's creative power and in conceiving with vividness his ideal picture. The really important part of our study will be the comparison between the work of the poet and the materials upon which he laboured—the association of his imaginary characters and events with the scenes amid which they are supposed to be located.

Emotion

The epic usually deals with the great elemental passions, and seldom concerns itself with the rarer and subtler emotions of human nature. The mightier passions are wonderfully impressive in their portrayal, so impressive and so interesting that they have formed the untiring theme of the world's greatest literature through all time; but they are not difficult to perceive or to understand. Usually, some one of these great passions stands forth as the dominant emotion of the work: this we must observe, as a necessary preparation for appreciating the artist's power in its portrayal. It will usually, though not inevitably, be found embodied in the chief actor and expressed through his deeds. The minor emotions are likely to manifest themselves through subordinate characters, and it is for the most part easy to discern their nature and to estimate their intensity. The relations existing between the several emotions, the causes from which they arise, and the effects which they produce are all likely to reveal

themselves without much difficulty to the attentive observer.

In epic poetry, the emotions should be objective — natural and proper to the characters in whom they appear and not a mere reflection of the author's own feeling. Sometimes, however, there is an obtrusion of the author's personality ; and the imaginary characters are made to feel, not as they would naturally have felt, but as their creator would have felt. We must take account of any such subjective element and must note its effect upon the poem. When large, it is almost if not quite invariably an indication of weakness and limitation on the part of the author.

Thought

As with all other literature, the substance of epic poetry is at bottom a substance of thought. Our discovery of this thought is often made difficult by the objective nature of the work : the abstract seems to be almost lost in the concrete. Our problem is to discover the inward meaning that lies hidden

behind the outward symbol; and this is always difficult. Another difficulty is presented by the very largeness of the epic: the mind is apt to be so impressed with some detail or division of the work as to lose sight of the larger significance of the whole.

The central thought is to be discovered by considering the main outcome or effect of the plot—the general impression, lesson, or truth left upon the mind by the whole course of the action. We are usually helped by considering the experience, the deeds, or the fate of the chief actor: in the hero, the action commonly centres and finds its significance. It may often be possible to separate the central thought into its several aspects. That thought may present an antithesis; and we need to observe the author's thought upon both sides of the question. It may present other relations of thought; and we must observe each element that enters into such a relation.

We shall be helped to a more complete understanding of the thought by considering

the development of the whole course of thought throughout the work. It may not always be possible to trace the thought thus in detail; but some approach to a satisfactory analysis may often be made. The development of the thought will correspond with the development of the narrative. The several divisions of the plot are likely to reveal distinct stages in the progress of the thought.

The minuteness of our study will depend upon the importance and difficulty of the thought. Where this is commonplace and simple, only a very general analysis is desirable. Where it is intricate and involved, or where it concerns some great life problem, we must pursue our study more into detail. In an epic poem, the thought is usually large and important, but seldom intricate: the epic tends to unite grandeur with simplicity. We may generally be content, therefore, with the thought in its larger outlines.

OUTLINE FOR THE STUDY OF EPIC POETRY

I.—THE STUDY OF THE FORM.

A.—*Structure.*

1. Books, cantos, etc.
2. Stanzas, paragraphs, etc.

B.—*Metre.*¹

C.—*Style.*

1. Qualities manifested.¹
2. Relative importance of these qualities.

II.—THE STUDY OF THE SUBSTANCE.

A.—*Beauty.*

1. Beauty in the plot, in general and in detail.
2. Beauty in the characters — outward or inward.
3. The kind of beauty.¹
4. The unbeautiful element — its effect in the work.

B.—*Ideality.*

1. The narrative plot.
 - (a) Statement of its general result.
 - (b) Outline of its development.
 - (1) Stages of the development.
 - (2) Various threads of interest.
 - (3) Effective means of development.
 - (c) Details of the narrative art.
 - (d) Interwoven plots.
 - (1) Study of individual plots as above.
 - (2) Result of the united plots.

¹ See General Outline, pp. 80-81.

(3) Development and means of the interweaving process.

(4) Relation of the individual plots to each other.

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2. The characters.

(a) Human beings.

(b) Supernatural beings, animals, etc.

3. The real element.

(a) Thought and emotion.

(b) Real basis for plot or characters.

(1) Real local setting.

(2) Historical setting.

(3) Sources of the plot.

C. — *Emotion*.¹

D. — *Thought*.¹

¹ See General Outline, pp. 80-81.

CHAPTER VI

THE STUDY OF LYRIC POETRY

THE lyric may deal with almost any subject of human thinking. It will of course deal primarily with humanity. In contrast with the epic, it tends to deal with man rather than with human life, though the latter is by no means ignored. God and the spiritual world are frequent subjects of lyric treatment; for toward the realm of the supernatural, the emotion of the poet is often directed. We may see practical illustration of this in the great number of sacred lyrics and hymns. Nature also has been the frequent theme of lyric song. Indeed, it is in our modern lyric poetry that nature has been treated with the greatest fullness, sympathy, and insight. Art is not often a direct subject of poetry; but it is more frequently treated in lyric poetry than elsewhere. Lyrics contain some of the deepest and most

significant sayings about art that have ever been uttered. From all of this, it will appear that the lyric has an even wider range than the epic: the only practical limitation lies in the possibility of arousing the poet's feeling.

The most essential characteristic of the lyric is its poetical expression of subjective emotion upon any possible subject. The lyric is therefore more intensely passionate than any other kind of poetry. This fact is at the bottom of some of its most striking peculiarities. It is this that makes it of all poetry the most musical. Its variety springs from the wonderful variety of human emotions. Its brevity is also associated with its passion; for the expression of emotion is likely to be condensed in proportion to its intensity. By virtue of the fact that it is usually a single and vehement outburst of warm human passion, the lyric is apt to embody the very essence and flower of poetry.

Lyric poetry may be classified upon three different principles of division: (1) the nature of the subject-matter; (2) the nature of the prevailing emotion; (3) the external form.

Traditional classifications are made without much discrimination of these principles.

We may have lyrics upon any of the six great subjects, — God, the Spiritual World, Man, Human Life, Nature, Art. Under any one of these, we may of course subdivide indefinitely. Traditionally, on the basis of subject-matter, we have sacred lyrics, lyrics of nature, and *vers de société*. These will readily suggest the general classes to which they belong.

Classification on the basis of the prevailing emotion is sufficiently easy, and may be almost indefinitely extended. We shall content ourselves with noting the most commonly recognized classes. Most important of all is the love lyric. Besides this, we have the devotional lyric, corresponding for the most part with the sacred lyric; the lyric of grief; the lyric of sentiment; the humorous lyric; the reflective lyric, where emotion is largely affected by thought.

The chief lyric forms are the song, the ode, the sonnet, and the quatrain. The song denotes any poem adapted to be sung. It is

usually written in some common measure, with an easy and simple arrangement of rhymes, and is divided into stanzas. The ode is characterized by noble sentiment, serious purpose, and sustained dignity of style. It is, therefore, not determined entirely by form. It has many features of the song, but is usually longer. In its freer form, it is written in stanzas of varying length and structure, and with a variety of measures. The Pindaric ode is more elaborate and artificial. The metre is iambic. The poem is divided into three groups, each group containing three dissimilar stanzas, called respectively the strophe, the antistrophe, and the epode. The groups are alike in structure. The typical sonnet contains fourteen iambic pentameter lines. The rhyme order is varied; but there is usually a division into an octave and a sestet or two quatrains and two tercets. Theoretically, the first eight lines contain the development, and the last six, the conclusion. The quatrain is practically a stanza of four lines, with rhymes usually alternating. Minor lyric forms are

the rondeau, rondel, triolet, ballade, and villanelle. They are of French origin, but have been much used by recent writers of light verse in English. They are very artificial, and contain little important poetry.

THE STUDY OF FORM

Structure

The lyric is so varied in form that we cannot designate any one structure as typical. As we have seen, the most important traditional forms are those of the song, the ode, the sonnet, and the quatrain, while minor forms are the rondeau, rondel, triolet, ballade, and villanelle. Where any of these forms occurs, we may easily observe its general characteristics and its individual peculiarities. The study of the stanza is an important part of the study of lyric structure. Stanza-structure has to do chiefly with the number and arrangement of lines and with the order of rhymes. We need to note also how stanzas are combined to form the whole.

Metre

Lyric poetry is nowhere more varied than in its metre ; and it therefore offers an interesting field for the study of this element of poetic form. It uses feet of all kinds and lines of every length. No particular foot is especially characteristic, the kind of foot being determined chiefly by the spirit of the poem. The most common lines are the tetrameter and the pentameter. The use of end-rhyme is well-nigh universal ; and there is likely to be abundance of alliteration and assonance. These elements determine in large measure the quality and effect of the music. The very diversity of lyric metre makes specific directions impracticable. An application of general principles to each particular poem will, however, be our sufficient guide.

Style

In style, the lyric is subject to the same laws as other literature ; but the various qualities are nowhere manifested more fully and

vividly. We may expect usually to find the intellectual qualities less strongly marked; for the lyric is not predominantly intellectual in its substance. It will generally be sufficiently clear and correct; but it is likely to be less simple than the epic. Lack of clearness may appear where the poet becomes too rhapsodical or dithyrambic, or where he allows the intrusion of subtle and abstruse thought.

Emotional qualities we shall expect to find very prominent. The particular qualities will of course depend upon the emotions expressed. Pathos is very common; and every poem will contain some kind and degree of strength. The ludicrous is not infrequent.

The imaginative qualities are also likely to be noteworthy. Emotion tends to quicken imagination; and lyric style is therefore vivid, picturesque, and suggestive. The study of imaginative qualities is a study of the power of words to reproduce imaginative effects and to incite imaginative activity. We seek, then, to discover the elements of style that possess concreteness or suggestiveness, and also to observe the nature of the effects produced.

No less prominent are the æsthetic qualities; for the lyric is the most musical of all forms of poetry. Perhaps the best way of appreciating its melody and harmony is by a vocal rendering which shall reproduce them to the ear. We may also make some critical observation of these qualities. Propriety of style is an appeal to our taste; and it is only by taste that it can be estimated. All of these matters are probably of more importance in lyric poetry than in any other form of literature.

THE STUDY OF SUBSTANCE

Beauty

Doubtless the first impulse and purpose of a lyric poem may be found in the poet's desire to utter his thought and feeling on a given subject. If, however, it is to be a true work of art, it must manifest that beauty which is the goal and crown of all artistic creation. It cannot be asserted too strongly that the poet's message is important; but, if the message is to take the form of a true

poem, it must be presented in accordance with the laws of ideal beauty.

Where, then, should we look for ideal beauty in the substance of a lyric poem? One might almost answer, "everywhere"; for we expect a lyric to be the very quintessence of poetry, and therefore of beauty. First, in the various pictures which embody the several thoughts and emotions. Beyond this we may look for a thousand details of beauty in the substance, now flashing in a thought, now lurking in a figure, now revealing itself in a subtle suggestion.

We shall find beauty of all degrees and of all kinds—physical, intellectual, and spiritual. Generally speaking, the beauty of the lyric is exquisite, tender, graceful, fascinating, rather than grand, tragic, or sublime. Of course, all this depends upon the nature of the poet and the poet's mood; but for the most part, the lyric is attuned to the lyre rather than to the organ.

The unbeautiful element is less important in the lyric than in other poetry; for the lyric does not deal so much in vivid con-

trasts, in the lights and shadows of life. Even where the poet is dealing with sorrow, suffering, death, these naturally gloomy subjects are usually made to reveal at once their hidden beauty, while their hideousness receives little emphasis.

Ideality

In the epic, the ideal element takes the form of a series of events woven together into a narrative plot. In the lyric, there is no such definite principle: all that we can say is that the ideal element in lyric poetry is some imaginative symbol of the thought and emotion. What the symbol shall be, we cannot predetermine. It may be a dream, a person, a scene, a picture, an event—a thousand, a million, things. Each individual poem may find a new symbol; for the almost infinite variety of thought and emotion leads to an equal variety of ideal forms. The symbol seems to be related to thought and emotion in at least three general ways. First, it may embody them. In other cases, they are not

so much embodied in it as reflected by it. The poet seems to express his thought and feeling independently of the imaginative form, and then to choose some symbol that illustrates or vivifies them. In still other cases, some actual object seems to have suggested to the poet certain thought and emotion which in turn become symbolized by it; in such a process, the object itself, originally real, becomes idealized.

To determine, in any poem, the nature of the central symbol is to define for our imagination the main ideal conception. Sometimes, we seem to have no main ideal conception, the leading thought and emotion being expressed abstractly. This is not to say that the poem lacks ideality: it is simply to say that the ideality appears in the minor parts of the work rather than in a main conception. A lyric poem is likely to contain in its minor conceptions many evidences of imaginative power, appearing as pictures, images, illustrations, figures of speech, etc. It is desirable to note the relations of these to each other, and to see how far they unite to form

a consistent whole. It may be well to bear in mind that we have reference here only to the ideal element in substance and not to the imaginative qualities of style: the distinction to be observed is that between the idea and the words which embody it.

The real element in lyric poetry is full of significance. Since the lyric is subjective, this real element is drawn primarily from the inner life and experience of the poet rather than from the outer world. It may, then, be called chiefly an experiential element. It will be seen that thought and emotion are real elements here in a sense which is not true of other kinds of poetry. They are real, in a word, because they have been a vital part of the actual life experience of the poet. In a study of the relation between real and ideal, therefore, we have first to ask how the poet has transmuted into ideal forms the thought and feeling which had been a part of his life and being. This inquiry will have more than an artistic interest; for it will also reveal to us the inner world of the poet's mind and soul. In some cases, this

interest will be little more than a matter of intellectual curiosity; but in all lyric poetry that is the intense and passionate utterance of the poet's nature, it will be an absorbing interest in the deep things of the human heart. In addition to this use of his own inner experience, the poet does, of course, use the realities of the external world as a basis for the ideal forms by which that inner experience is to be symbolized. We have seen that these ideal forms are almost infinite in variety; and so, likewise, are the realities upon which they are based. We can only determine in each case what realities the poet has there used, and observe how these realities are related to the imaginative expression of the thought and emotion.

Emotion

Lyric poetry is as free in its possible range of feeling as in its possible range of subjects. Some of the emotions most frequently expressed are love, grief, devotion, patriotism, valour, enthusiasm, aspiration, hope,

disappointment. The great bulk of lyric poetry is, in one aspect or another, the poetry of love. In general, the greater poem is produced by the emotion that is more nearly universal and more thoroughly human. The value of the artistic result, however, is determined not alone by the character of the emotion, but also by its intensity, by its depth, by the beauty and vividness of its poetical expression.

The dominant emotion is usually evident; for emotion is so prominent in the lyric that its chief manifestation can seldom be obscure or concealed. Sometimes, however, the rarity or subtlety of an emotion makes it elusive; and occasionally, the complicated relation between several emotions makes it hard to decide which is predominant. A consideration of the final impression left by the whole poem will usually solve any difficulty. Occasionally, we shall need our best insight and keenest discrimination. Subordinate emotions are for the most part easily observed. The study of the relations existing between emotions may sometimes be more difficult: it

will enable us better to appreciate the poem, not only as a work of art, but also as the poet's utterance concerning the relations that exist between the great forces of human life.

The study of the causes and effects of emotion in a lyric poem presents a somewhat peculiar problem. In epic or drama, these causes and effects appear within the work itself. In the lyric, the case is different. If we look for causes, we are led directly back to the life and character of the author; for it is thence that the emotions directly arise. If we look for effects, again we are led outside of the poem, and into the heart of the reader; for it is there that the emotion of the poem reaches its immediate goal.

We are often called upon to consider whether the objects dealt with by the poet have been portrayed according to their own nature or have been distorted by the poet's fancy under the influence of strong emotion. Ruskin, discarding the terms objective and subjective in this relation, denotes this alteration of reality by the term pathetic fallacy. This indicates more clearly its true nature.

Where this fallacy exists, it is usually a sign of weakness in the poet, in that he cannot keep his emotion from distorting his vision. When it is used to indicate a morbid state of feeling in some person outside of the poet, it serves a truly artistic purpose; for it then has a dramatic effect in the portrayal of character.

Thought

Though the lyric is preëminently concerned with the expression of emotion, this does not preclude the fact that it is also the expression of thought. The thought itself may be comparatively unimportant; but it determines the emotion and furnishes its occasion. The thought of a lyric is usually to be determined more easily than that of an epic. In the first place, it is more definite and more clearly expressed. Then, it is less likely to be hidden by the concrete picture. The epic poet must express his thought in terms of action. The lyric poet may express himself in precise terms or under the thin veil of an easily understood symbol.

The central thought is usually on the surface or not far to seek. Where it presents any special difficulty, we must turn from any individual thoughts, however striking, to consider the general effect of the whole poem. Where the thought is definitely expressed, it will most often appear at the beginning; and where it is suggested through an image or symbol, it is more likely to reveal itself at the close. The various phases or aspects of the central thought will usually appear from a consideration of the poem as a whole; but sometimes they may be taken up successively, and will thus correspond practically with the successive steps in the development of the thought.

The study of this development will help us to understand the thought of the poem in detail. Usually, the thought of a lyric is comparatively simple, both in its nature and in its treatment; and in such a case, it would be useless to make anything more than the most simple analysis. The analysis should be made, not for its own sake, but for the purpose of understanding the poem. Occasionally, however, analysis is difficult; and it

may sometimes be necessary to consider almost every line and sentence in order to be sure of the poet's meaning. In studying the development of the thought, the mechanical divisions of the poem are often serviceable guides, though not to be implicitly relied on. The stanzas, for instance, may mark the several stages of the thought; but this is by no means invariable, and we must often make our division by groups rather than by single stanzas. In the ode, the stanzas will be better guides to the thought than in the song: as a matter of fact, they are determined largely by the natural divisions of the thought. In both song and ode, single stanzas may indicate smaller divisions, and groups of stanzas may indicate larger divisions. This is particularly noteworthy in the Pindaric ode. The typical sonnet presents the development of the thought in the first eight lines and the conclusion in the last six; but many sonnets modify this theoretical treatment. Wherever the lyric structure fails to indicate the outline of the thought, we must of course depend upon our own judgment and discrimination.

OUTLINE FOR THE STUDY OF LYRIC POETRY

I. — THE STUDY OF THE FORM.

A. — *Structure.*

1. Structure of song, ode, sonnet, etc.
2. Stanzas and stanza-groups.

B. — *Metre.*¹

C. — *Style.*²

II. — THE STUDY OF THE SUBSTANCE.

A. — *Beauty.*

1. Beauty in the ideal pictures of the work.
2. Beauty in the minor details of substance.
3. The kind of beauty.¹
4. The unbeautiful element.²

B. — *Ideality.*

1. The main ideal symbol or conception.
2. Minor ideal conceptions.
3. Relation of the various conceptions.
4. The real element.
 - (a) Thought and emotion.
 - (b) External realities.

C. — *Emotion.*

1-4.¹

5. Existence or non-existence of pathetic fallacy.

D. — *Thought.*¹

¹ See General Outline, pp. 80-81.

² See Outline for the Study of Epic Poetry, pp. 108-109.

CHAPTER VII

THE STUDY OF THE DRAMA

THE nature of the drama would seem to define for us at once the character of its subject-matter. As regards the main subject, this is substantially true; for the dramatist must always deal principally with humanity. We shall need, however, to discriminate whether a particular drama deals chiefly with man or with human life: it must deal more or less with both; but one or the other will predominate. Probably our decision will usually be in favour of the latter, since the typical drama represents man in action. We might suppose that the drama could not deal with the other great subjects of literature; but this would be far from the fact. The drama may involve the relation of humanity to some one or more of the other subjects; and so those subjects become, indirectly and subor-

dinately, themes for treatment. We are often thus shown the relation of man to God and the spiritual world; and even nature and art may become, upon occasion, the subjects of discussion. The drama holds most firmly to the human centre; but like man, it looks out upon the universe and reflects upon all that is.

The essential purpose of the drama is to present an ideal, objective portrayal of human life and character. In doing this, it combines a certain group of characters with a certain plot or series of events. The characters reveal themselves and evolve the plot through dialogue and action. Drama insists strongly upon the principle of unity: for it is the most complex of literary forms dealing with the most complex of subjects; and looseness would be chaos. It insists that the action shall be complete and self-explanatory: this requirement arises from the fact that everything is to be set before the eyes of an audience, and that no opportunity is offered for supplementing or interpreting the action by anything outside of itself. It also tends

to insist upon probability : this is entirely natural since the drama is representing human life ; but in practice, the principle is not infrequently ignored.

Drama is commonly divided first into ancient and modern. The division is not alone historical, but involves marked differences in form and spirit. Ancient drama is in the form of an almost continuous dialogue, divided into parts by choruses. It restricted its movement by the three unities of time, place, and action. It tended to represent man as the victim of a relentless and inevitable fate. The modern drama is more formally divided into acts and scenes. It commonly observes only the unity of action or subject. Its fundamental view of life seems to be that character determines destiny—that man's fate is the outcome of his own nature under the given conditions. Modern drama is divided into classical and romantic. The former is largely influenced by the laws and procedures of the ancient drama. The latter is much freer, both in method and in choice of subject. Historical forms of the modern drama,

of minor importance, are Mystery, Miracle Play, Morality, Interlude, Masque, Farce. These disclose the religious origin of dramatic representation, and illustrate the various stages in the development of the drama.

A significant division of drama is into Tragedy, Comedy, and Reconciling-Drama. Tragedy presents the characters as working toward some inevitable ruin or catastrophe. Its effect is, according to the principle of Aristotle, to purify the soul through pity and terror. Comedy presents a cheerful or humorous view of life. Virtue is rewarded, vice is foiled, "poetic justice" is meted out. As a rule, the subject is familiar and the action probable. Tragedy tends to the use of verse; comedy, though in a less degree, to the use of prose. The reconciling-drama mingles the tragic and the comic. It has the happy ending of comedy; but tragedy struggles throughout for the mastery, and it is not until the close of the action that the happy ending is assured. The drama reaches its object in a reconciling of the tragic and the comic into harmonious consistency.

THE STUDY OF FORM

Structure

The structure of drama is of course peculiar. The typical modern drama is divided into a certain number of acts—usually five. These are divided into scenes, determined by change of location or by the entrance or exit of characters. In the ancient drama and in the minor forms of the modern drama, this division into acts and scenes is wanting, though we often have divisions that are practically equivalent to these. The unit of dramatic structure is the single speech in dialogue; and probably dialogue is the only element of structure common to all drama. The speeches fall into various dialogue groups, determined by entrance or exit of characters: there may be one or more of these groups in a scene. The introduction of a lyric element and the alternation of prose and verse are important facts of structure in many dramas. As a rule, the drama is more definite and regular in structure than any other kind of literature.

Metre

Metre in the drama is somewhat more varied than in the epic, but much less so than in the lyric. Few kinds of metre are used ; but there is considerable freedom and variety in the mode of handling. The common measure in English drama is the unrhymed iambic pentameter : heroic couplet has been used by some dramatists, but not with distinguished success. Where a lyric element appears, as in choruses or songs, there is greater variety of metre and freer use of rhyme. In most dramas, end-rhyme is not frequent ; but there are likely to be many examples of alliteration and assonance.

Style

Dramatic style has two important peculiarities. In the first place, it is objective : it represents, not the author, but his imaginary personages. The practical question is how far the style is adapted to the various characters. The second peculiarity is that the

style may alternate between prose and verse. In good dramatic work, this change is no matter of accident. It is determined by the character, the mood, the circumstances, the subject, or some other sufficient cause.

The intellectual qualities of style are not marked. Style is usually correct, and often clear ; but it can hardly, as a rule, be called simple. Not seldom, it will be decidedly abstruse ; and sometimes, even obscure. Of course, all this depends upon the author, the subject, and the particular circumstances. Nevertheless, it will be justified by the drama as a whole. The reasons for this state of affairs are too many and too obscure for present discussion.

The play of emotion in a drama is generally both varied and intense ; and the style which conveys this emotion must necessarily be remarkable for emotional qualities. It will display all kinds of strength, all shades of pathos, all varieties of the ludicrous. Even in a single drama, the range is likely to be very wide.

We might say of the drama, as of the epic,

that it has no absolute need to make large use of the imaginative qualities of style. The style of many dramas is comparatively plain and unpicturesque. On the other hand, however, there are dramas which display all the glories of imaginative speech. This difference depends mainly upon the dramatist, the characters, the circumstances, the prose or verse form. No style is more concrete than that of a highly imaginative drama; and probably the style of the lyric alone surpasses it in suggestiveness.

The æsthetic qualities of style depend upon much the same conditions. If the dramatist is also a poet, these qualities will be marked wherever characters and circumstances give occasion for beautiful language. If the dramatist or the subject is lacking in poetic capabilities, there will be a corresponding lack of beauty in style. The range of variety is in proportion to the almost infinite variety of dramatic representation. Melody is least marked, though many passages are exquisitely melodious. Style will find full play for harmony in adapting itself to a thousand changing

conditions. Nowhere is there better opportunity for the manifestation of propriety.

THE STUDY OF SUBSTANCE

Beauty

In the drama, we may be tempted to wonder whether the prime purpose is not ideal truth rather than ideal beauty. Ideal truth is undoubtedly one great purpose of the drama; and so far as drama fails to attain this end, it fails in true dramatic quality. As a work of art, however, the drama seeks the ultimate object of ideal beauty through the more immediate object of ideal truth. So far as it attains ideal truth of life and character, it is truly dramatic; so far as the ideally true is also ideally beautiful, it is truly artistic.

We may naturally expect to find beauty first in the portrayal of humanity. Who can doubt that we should find beauty of character, whether in body, mind, or soul? Similarly, we may look for the beautiful in the general representation of life. On the whole, beauty predominates in life, and should predominate

in any artistic portrayal of life. The form of this beauty will vary with the individual work. In comedy, it shows itself as "poetic justice," or the triumph of good over evil. In tragedy, it may appear as a sublime endurance of inevitable fate, as a grand manifestation of courage or magnanimity, as an affecting picture of deep tenderness and pathos, as a victory of the best instincts of the soul over defeat and death. There is a beauty in the humour of pure comedy that exhilarates and delights the mind; there is a beauty in the very terror of tragedy that purifies and sublimates the soul.

The drama involves action as well as characters; and we may also look for beauty there. As in the epic, it may be found in the general effect of the plot, and also in the separate events or groups of events that go to make up the story. In every great drama, too, insight and æsthetic appreciation will not fail to discover a thousand beauties of detail. Minor conceptions, pictures, images, illustrations, will constantly be flashing their beauty upon us.

Within its proper sphere of human life, the

drama has the fullest manifestation of beauty in all kinds. Beauty physical is always before our eyes in the men and women that crowd the scene. Beauty intellectual exalts the manhood and womanhood of all the great characters. Beauty spiritual is ever revealing itself in deeds of love and devotion, of courage and honour.

There will almost invariably be a decided manifestation of the unbeautiful; for drama deals largely in those powerful contrasts which are so necessary to a true and vivid picture of life. This unbeautiful element will appear in characters, deeds, relations, motives, situations, events. Where it has been used artistically to exalt the beautiful or to reveal more fully the essential truth of life, it can only enhance the greatness of the drama.

Ideality

The ideal element in the drama consists of the representation of a certain section of human life. This representation has three principal features: the general picture of life;

the individual characters ; the plot, by means of which life and character are revealed through action. A careful reading of the drama will enable us to grasp the leading outlines and the general effect of the representation. This will give us the author's main ideal conception, and will prepare us better for the study of the various features in detail.

If the drama is chiefly concerned with humanity, it is natural and appropriate that closer study should begin with the human element. We may consider first the dramatic picture of life. Here we must begin by inquiring just what section of life the dramatist has undertaken to portray. Each individual drama must look upon life from some particular point of view ; and it can portray only what falls within its limited horizon. It is desirable to define, so far as possible, this point of view and the section of life determined by it. Beyond this, the study of the picture of life is a study of the characters in their various relations. This will lead to the practical problem of character-grouping ; for it is through the various natural groups that

we are best able to appreciate the relations of characters to each other and to the whole. Some of the leading relations which determine the formation of such groups are those of similarity or contrast, agreement or disagreement, contiguity or remoteness, comparative dramatic rank. We must determine in each drama what the natural groups are and upon what principles of grouping they depend.

In the study of individual character, there are two main objects of consideration: character-portrayal and character-development. We need to ask first what kind of man or woman the dramatist has portrayed. In some dramas, and with some characters in every drama, the work of characterization ends with portrayal. The greatest and most important characters, however, undergo transformation and development as a result of their experiences. Personality, of course, persists; but it is greatly modified. The character is usually portrayed in the first act. Throughout the rest of the drama, we may observe the successive stages of change. The means and method of study will be sub-

stantially the same whether we are considering portrayal or development.

The evidence to be considered is similar to that which appeals to us in actual life, except that the dramatist tends to pass over what is merely accidental and to present only what is significant and typical. In the first place, we have the words that the character speaks, the acts that he performs, the relations that he sustains. Then we have the opinions of the other dramatic personages, as manifested by their words and their attitude. As a rule, all our evidence must come in these two ways. It is not impossible for the author to tell us directly what he intended; but this is felt to be an intrusion, and we are usually left to consider the evidence for ourselves. This evidence, we must interpret substantially as in real life: we must consider all the evidence offered, must balance fact with fact, must take into account the attendant circumstances, must have regard to the character of the witness, must view the part in the light of the whole. It is to be borne in mind that the drama itself is our only au-

thority. We must not read into the author's work our own notions or even our knowledge of historical facts. Finally, we must beware of relying on a merely intellectual interpretation. Imagination, insight, sympathy, are the chief secrets of a true appreciation.

Our practical study should begin with a general conception of the character, but one that is subject to modification or change. Then we must begin at the opening of the drama, and consider the details in the order in which they are presented by the author. Step by step, we must trace the portrayal and development of the character until the last deed is performed and the last word spoken. Not even then do we fully understand the character; for analysis enables us to comprehend only fragments and elements. As we began with a general conception, so we need to end. This must result from the effort of the imagination to conceive and realize the character as a living whole.

The study of plot in the drama involves substantially the same principles and problems as in epic poetry. It will be sufficient here,

therefore, to give a mere outline of the criticism of plot, and to note the peculiarities of dramatic narrative. First, we may state the result of the plot, bearing in mind that this statement should be brief, comprehensive, and concrete. Then we may trace the development of the plot, noting the several stages of development, the various threads of interest, the effective means by which the movement of the plot is determined. The drama follows in the main a chronological order, and thus presents little difficulty as regards the succession of events. Moreover, the division into acts and scenes is of decided advantage in helping us to note the larger and smaller divisions of the plot. By observing the relation of events to the scene, of the scenes to the act, and of the acts to the whole drama, we shall easily trace the progress of the action. Theoretically, Act I gives the introduction or exposition; Act II furnishes events that complicate the plot; Act III shows the full complication of the action; Act IV furnishes the means for unraveling the complication; and Act V presents the solution or culmination.

The matter of interwoven plots, as we have seen, does not in theory present any special difficulties. We may first consider each plot by itself, and may then consider the result of the combined plots, the development and means of the interweaving process, and the relation of the individual plots to each other. The chief means by which dramatic plots are interwoven will be found in the purposes and relations of the various characters. Here, again, we touch the question of character-grouping: it is both interesting and significant to observe the transference of characters from group to group and from plot to plot as the drama proceeds. A subordinate means of interweaving is found in certain events that have an influence upon both plots. ¹

The supernatural not infrequently holds a subordinate place in the drama. Sometimes this is presented frankly as something believed in by the dramatist and his age; and sometimes it is simply the ideal embodiment of human motives. Sometimes the supernatural beings have objective reality; and some-

times they are the product of morbid imagination in some character. We must consider the attributes of these supernatural beings, the motives or mental states which they represent, their relation to the characters and to the action.

The study of the ideal element leads us naturally to a study of the real element. As elsewhere, thought and emotion are real; but in drama they are extremely idealized by being made a part of some imaginary character. There is also a real element underlying the characters and the plot. Sometimes this lies merely in the author's general knowledge of human nature: in this case, we have to consider only the relation of the drama to real life. Sometimes, however, the author deals with characters and events which are historical, or which have been created by some imagination other than his own. Historical material and imaginative material stand in substantially the same relation to the work of the dramatist; for in both cases, his imagination has appropriated and idealized what it did not originally create.

Local setting, historical setting, and the sources of the plot are especially significant in the study of drama. Where the dramatist has made real scenes the background for his representation of humanity, the drama and the local setting reflect interest upon each other. The historical setting is even more important; for we can hardly dispense with a knowledge of historical facts upon which a drama is based, with which it is directly connected, or by which it is interpreted and illustrated. The drama, more frequently than other literature, draws its plot from external sources; and by comparison between the two, we are enabled to see what the imagination of the dramatist has accomplished in transforming a simple tale or a rude legend into a great masterpiece.

Emotion

The range of emotions in the drama is almost unlimited. The stronger and more elemental passions are most common; but the finer and subtler emotions are by no means

rare. We shall of course need to seek first the dominant emotion or emotions, noting their harmony or conflict with each other. A consideration of the chief characters will usually afford us a clue to the principal emotions. Minor emotions will display themselves in the various characters and situations throughout the drama. They are likely to be many, and to show great variety in kind and in degree of intensity, as well as in manner of expression. The relations between the various emotions is a matter of much importance: for emotion is a vital part of character; and relations between characters determine the picture of life. These relations are usually simple; but often the complexity of feelings calls for our best insight and knowledge of human nature. No less important is the study of the causes and effects of emotion; for we are here given an insight into the motives and results of human conduct as manifested in feeling. Emotion will usually be objective. Sometimes, however, the dramatist obtrudes himself into his work; and the subjective element thus introduced

must be observed if we are rightly to understand and to estimate the work.

Thought

The determination of the thought in drama is more difficult than in any other form of literature. This is natural, for many reasons. In the first place, the drama is the most complex and intricate form of literary art. Then, the extreme objectivity of drama makes it difficult to get through the artist's creations to the artist's mind. Not least in importance is the fact that the drama is the most concrete of literary forms, and therefore the hardest to reduce to the abstract.

We shall gain the best clue to the central thought by considering the chief characters and their relations, the general effect of the picture of life, and the resultant effect of the plot. The validity of our judgment should be tested also by the details of the drama. The different aspects of the main thought are likely to be suggested by the several groups of characters, and by the separate in-

terwoven plots or the marked divisions of a single plot.

The development of the thought, like the development of the plot, will usually have its various stages marked by the scenes and acts. These, therefore, will be practical helps to our study. We have pointed out that the drama especially emphasizes the principle of unity; and this implies that it holds firmly to its central thought. Nevertheless, it will be found that the drama presents many minor thoughts of individual interest and significance. Where this is the case, or where individual thoughts involve any special difficulty of interpretation, they should receive particular consideration. The gems of thought—beautiful, witty, wise, profound—which have been collected from our great dramatists will suggest the richness of the drama in this respect.

OUTLINE FOR THE STUDY OF DRAMA

I.—THE STUDY OF THE FORM.

A.—*Structure.*

1. Acts and scenes.
2. Dialogue and dialogue groups.
3. Lyric element and alternation of prose and verse.

B.—*Metre.*¹C.—*Style.*

1. Adaptation of the style to the characters.
2. Alternation of prose and verse.
3. Qualities manifested.¹
4. Relative importance of these qualities.

II.—THE STUDY OF THE SUBSTANCE.

A.—*Beauty.*

1. Beauty in the characters.²
2. Beauty in the representation of human life.
3. Beauty in the plot.²
4. The kind of beauty.¹
5. The unbeautiful element.²

B.—*Ideality.*

1. General notion of the main ideal conception.
2. The human element.
 - (a) The dramatic picture of life.
 - (1) The particular section of life portrayed.
 - (2) Character relations — as shown by character-grouping.

¹ See General Outline, pp. 80-81.

² See Outline for the Study of Epic Poetry, pp. 108-109.

- (b) The individual characters.
 - (1) Character portrayal.
 - (2) Character development.
- 3. The plot.²
- 4. The supernatural element.
 - (a) Attributes of the supernatural beings.
 - (b) Motives or mental states which they represent.
 - (c) Their relation to characters and action.
- 5. The real element.²
- C. — *Emotion*.¹
- D. — *Thought*.¹

¹ See General Outline, pp. 80-81.

² See Outline for the Study of Epic Poetry, pp. 108-109.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STUDY OF PROSE ROMANCE

WITH the romance, we pass from poetry to prose, from the higher class of literature to the lower. This difference in form implies many differences in subject, in spirit, and in method. The romance is not likely to concern itself with the great problems of existence or with profound and far-reaching truths. It deals principally with human life—not, to be sure, in its common relations, but at least in those which are comparatively superficial and traditional. It seldom deals with man as such or gives any deep insight into the human soul. God and the spiritual world are sometimes subjects of consideration; but here again, the matter presented is likely to be commonplace. Very little treatment of nature will be found, and that mainly conventional. Art is almost never a subject.

The great allegorical romances will offer many exceptions to these general propositions.

The romance is the prose counterpart of the epic : it is primarily a narrative in prose. It differs from all dramatic literature in that characters exist for the sake of events. These characters may not be human at all. Not infrequently, they are supernatural beings, animals, or even plants and inanimate objects personified. As a rule, the romance has even less of real human interest than the epic, and less of dramatic quality in situations and in action. It is usually objective, although the freedom of prose offers somewhat more of opportunity for the obtrusion of the author's personality. Probably more than any other form of literature, it emphasizes the liberties rather than the limitations of imagination.

Romances are of different kinds, but there are no well-defined and commonly recognized classes. The only significant principle of division lies in the fact that the romance seems to deal with its subject in three principal ways, thus producing three more or less dis-

tinct varieties. In the first place, it may be frankly romantic in its exercise of imagination, and may present to us in an ingenuous manner events and characters that are beyond the range of any rational belief. The author may have a childish faith in the marvels that he relates, or he may be consciously and professedly telling an improbable and fanciful tale for the entertainment of his readers. In the second place, the author may relate things just as improbable as those supposed above, but may do it in such a way as to give to the whole a deceptive air of verisimilitude. In the third place, the author may present events and characters which are frankly imaginary, but which are used allegorically to represent certain real human types and experiences. Here may be included the fable, which is also in its way allegorical.

THE STUDY OF FORM

Structure

The structure of the romance is perhaps somewhat more regular than that of the epic,

though it is by no means absolutely fixed. The common division is into books and chapters; and to this division, or its equivalent, most romances will be found to conform. Sometimes the divisions are given other names, as for instance, "parts" and "stages." Division into paragraphs is of course a feature of the romance; but these are not usually very significant. Good paragraphing is one of the latest achievements of literary prose, and is hardly to be looked for in those earlier periods when the romance begins to flourish.

Style

The intellectual qualities of style in the romance are not particularly marked, although some later romances are models in this respect. The narrative character of the romance would naturally favour clearness and simplicity of style; but its development in periods when prose style was comparatively unformed would unite with the remote and fanciful nature of its subjects to create a tendency in the opposite direction. On the whole, we may say

that the romance in its highest and best forms has that advantage over poetry which comes from its use of the more intellectual and more commonplace medium of expression.

We have observed that the emotional qualities are not very prominent in the epic. The same causes would make this true also of the romance, while the prose form would make the style of the romance even less noteworthy for its indications of emotional power. The chief emotional quality is likely to be strength; and this will probably appear in its more ordinary rather than in its rarer and loftier forms. Pathos and the ludicrous are not likely to manifest themselves frequently or in a striking manner.

The romance is of course inferior to poetry in the imaginative qualities of style. It is probably, on the whole, superior to other narrative prose. We have observed that its early origin and its fanciful nature tend to make its style less intellectual; but those very facts must tend to make style more imaginative. As a rule, it will be chiefly notable for the quality of concreteness; for suggestiveness is

naturally the product of more subtle and refined genius—the attribute of poetry rather than of prose.

We must also expect to find the romance inferior to poetry in the æsthetic qualities of style; for it is here that verse shows its most decided advantages as a medium of literary expression. Probably the style of the romance is superior in beauty to that of the novel, and for much the same reasons as those just noted in the case of the imaginative qualities. This superiority, however, is not altogether so certain or so marked.

THE STUDY OF SUBSTANCE

Beauty

Beauty is to be expected in the substance of romance, since the romance is usually written professedly for the pleasure and delight of the reader. Such beauty as there is will commonly lie upon the surface. It may be more fanciful and less exalted than the beauty of poetry; but it is worthy to be considered and to be appreciated at its own worth.

We may look for beauty first in the plot. We may expect to find it in the general effect of the narrative and in the outcome of the whole series of occurrences; in the separate events and groups of events; in the deeds and experiences of the several personages. We may also look for it in the characters themselves—in their external appearance, in their actions and relations, in their thoughts, feelings, moods, and dispositions.

We have intimated that the beauty of the romance is not in general so lofty or so serious as that of poetry. This does not, however, imply that we may not discover beauty of all kinds and degrees. Physical beauty is very common; for romance delights to picture scenes, situations, events, and personages of the greatest physical loveliness. Intellectual beauty is less common; for romance is less likely to deal with exalted and beautiful thoughts. Spiritual beauty may manifest itself to a considerable degree in noble moods and motives, in high courage and devotion, in lofty ideals and aspirations. The romance,

therefore, is not unworthy of its true place in literature.

The unbeautiful element is comparatively small ; for romance does not deal so largely in those striking contrasts which are so effective in epic and drama. The romancer is not so great an artist as the poet, and may fear to deal with forces that may destroy rather than exalt his work. Where the ugly or the horrible appear, it is commonly in the form of some villain, tyrant, or monster who is to be overthrown by valour in the interests of beauty or renown. Its force and effect are readily apparent.

Ideality

The ideal element in the romance consists primarily of a narrative plot. Our previous study of plot in epic and drama will preclude the necessity here of anything but the merest outline. The plot of the romance is substantially similar to that of the epic ; and both are presented by the method of direct narration. We have seen that a plot consists of two elements, the events and the actors, and

that its purpose is the working out of some particular result.

In studying the plot, we may begin with a concrete statement of its result. This, together with the essential features of the plot, will give us the main ideal conception. Our further study will bring out the various parts and phases of this main conception, and will show us the minor ideal conceptions of the work. After noting the result, we may turn our attention to the development of the plot, noting the stages of its progress, the different threads of interest, and the effective means of the development. Here we may follow the indications of the outward structure. Sometimes there may be two or more distinct stages within a chapter; and sometimes two or more chapters may unite to form one distinct stage. More commonly, however, each chapter has a significance of its own in marking the progress of the narrative. The books will usually correspond accurately with the larger divisions of the plot. Sometimes a book may include several large divisions marked by groups of chapters.

We may pass from this general study of the plot to the observation of the details of the narrative art. What this involves we have already pointed out in our consideration of epic plot. The separate events in the romance are often interesting and suggestive, although they may not be profoundly significant. The romance follows the simple chronological order perhaps more frequently than the epic. The great arts by which narrative is made vivid and effective are not so fully displayed, because the artist is generally inferior in genius. Episodes are on the whole less common, although many instances occur. Description is freely used, as in all narrative; but it is not likely to be so lofty and impressive.

The problem of interwoven plots is not so frequent as in either epic or drama. The romancer often has several different stories to deal with; but he is likely to tell each by itself rather than to weave them into a vital unity. In the older romances, this is particularly true; and a typical case is where a single hero, or different heroes of the same

company or class, may be represented as meeting with several distinct series of adventures or experiences. We have a fair example in the various stories that are loosely associated with each other through King Arthur and the Round Table. In any such case, we have simply a number of distinct narratives; and we may study each separately and then observe by what bond they are associated. Where the problem of interwoven plots is really involved, we may follow the method of study already described in the case of the epic.

We need not often spend much time in the study of the characters for their own sake; for the portrayal of lifelike human character in the romance is comparatively rare. Indeed, the romance preferably chooses such characters as mythical or legendary heroes, giants, dwarfs, fairies, monsters, angels, demons, animals, personified natural objects. When the work is allegorical, it will be worth while to consider the characters as to the symbolical meaning which they involve. Where characters demand attention because

of their real human interest, or because they are significant representatives of the spiritual or the natural world, we may follow, though perhaps less minutely, the method already outlined for the study of characters in the drama.

The highly imaginative character of romance naturally implies its remoteness from the actual world. The real element is likely, therefore, to be comparatively small. Something of reality must, however, exist; and as the real element becomes smaller in a work, it is perhaps even more significant. There will be here, as elsewhere, a real element of thought and emotion. The plot and characters may of course be largely borrowed, whether from historical, semi-historical, legendary, or earlier literary sources. Such real elements as these, and also such matters of detail as have a basis in reality, are to be carefully considered and compared with the imaginative result. The study of real local setting is less significant than in the drama, for it is not so necessary to our vivid conception of the ideal picture that we should see

the characters in the midst of their actual surroundings. Such knowledge of localities, however, where possible, is not to be despised. The study of historical setting or of the sources of the plot is as important here as elsewhere ; or if any less important, it is because the work itself is of less literary value, and therefore less worthy of exhaustive study.

Emotion

The romance usually deals with the more common and simple emotions ; and therefore its emotional element is comparatively easy of study. The emotions are much the same as in the epic ; but their portrayal is not usually so profound or so impressive. The romance is more likely to skim the surface of human passion. Its emotions are vivid, intense, interesting ; but they are less significant and vital. The dominant emotion will usually be apparent and easily apprehended : it will ordinarily be revealed in the person of the hero or heroine, or in the mutual relations of the chief personages. The subordinate emo-

tions will not give us much more difficulty. They may have a variety of manifestations; but they will usually be few and simple. We may look for them, of course, in the several characters of the narrative. It will naturally follow from what has been said that the relations between the various emotions will involve little complication, and that their causes and effects will readily appear.

The emotion of the romance, as of epic and drama, should be objective; for the author is endeavouring to represent the feelings of his imaginary beings. The greater freedom of prose not only affords more opportunity, but also offers greater temptation for the introduction of subjective feeling. The romance is, however, reasonably free from this subjective element. Its earlier development, as tending to free it from modern self-consciousness, would aid toward complete objectivity. Where the author does intrude, it is usually in a naïve way suggestive of imperfect art rather than of an impulse to make his own feeling prominent.

Thought

The thought of the romance is seldom profound, abstruse, complicated, or difficult. In spite of its comparative simplicity, however, the central thought is not always easy to discover. This is due in the first place to the fact that the writer of romance is tempted to lose himself in a mere series of interesting but unrelated events, forgetting that a truly great work of art must be informed by some principle of vital unity that gives impressiveness and power to the whole. In a word, it may be hard to find the author's central meaning because he comes so near to having none. His concrete pictures have a tendency to forego their real significance as symbols of something above and beyond themselves. Of later and more truly artistic romances, this is of course not true. Another element of difficulty lies in the fact that the romance, like the epic and the drama, is naturally concrete and objective. In general, however, the ideal picture is so simple that its meaning is more readily apparent than in some other literary forms.

The central thought is, of course, to be discovered by considering the final outcome and general impression of the plot, and also the experiences and relations of the leading characters. We need here to guard ourselves from dwelling upon impressive details and so missing the meaning of the whole. The different aspects of the central thought will usually be few, simple, and apparent.

The development of the course of thought may be easily traced. The outward structure and the development of the plot will be suggestive in this connection. In some rare romances, our study of the details of the thought can hardly be too minute; for we are dealing with ideas that are deeply significant. This is particularly true of some allegorical romances. There, the story exists primarily for the sake of the thought; and that thought will usually be important. In most romances, however, the separate thoughts are neither important nor difficult; and a comprehension of the main outlines of the thought will usually be sufficient for ordinary purposes.

OUTLINE FOR THE STUDY OF PROSE
ROMANCE

I. — THE STUDY OF THE FORM.

A. — *Structure.*

1. Books, chapters, etc.

2. Paragraphs.

B. — *Style.*²

II. — THE STUDY OF THE SUBSTANCE.

A. — *Beauty.*²B. — *Ideality.*²C. — *Emotion.*¹D. — *Thought.*¹¹ See General Outline, pp. 80-81.² See Outline for the Study of Epic Poetry, pp. 108-109.

CHAPTER IX

THE STUDY OF THE ESSAY

THE essay, like the lyric, may deal with almost any subject of human thinking. It shows the natural tendency of all literature to seek the human centre; but its interest is by no means confined to humanity. It probably deals most frequently with human life. The more serious forms of the essay, however, do not hesitate to deal with man; and they sometimes discuss the profoundest problems of the human soul. Essays dealing with God, the spiritual world, or nature are less frequent, though by no means rare. The subject of art is a common one, as may be seen from the great body of essays devoted to literary and art criticism.

The things most characteristic of the essay are its subjectivity, its prose form, and its mixture of the artistic and the practical. Its sub-

jective character allies it with the lyric ; but it is less distinctly a revelation of the author's personality. Its differences from the lyric are determined largely by its prose form : the most significant of these is its emphasis upon thought rather than upon emotion. The essay is, more often than other literature, a mixed species of literary art: the freedom of prose has here the fullest play; and the predominance of thought naturally serves the practical purpose and leads to a more abstract form of expression. The essay is usually expository in character. Sometimes it endeavours to convince and persuade. All of these purposes have a practical tendency: the author uses the methods of the teacher, the logician, and the orator in addition to those of the artist.

Among the many varieties of essay, it is almost impossible to make any satisfactory classification. The number of kinds is too great ; and the grounds of distinction are too indefinite. Neither subject-matter nor form affords an adequate basis for division : for there are no well-defined or traditional classes of subjects ; and the essay has not developed

any characteristic and distinctive forms. It may serve us in some measure to note two very general types. The earlier and more purely literary type may be called the familiar or personal essay : it more nearly corresponds to the lyric as revealing the personal feeling and peculiarities of the author. The later type may be called the didactic essay : it deals more with thought, and aims to instruct ; its literary quality is more incidental. A species of the didactic essay deserving of special mention is literary and art criticism. By the very nature of the subject-matter, the author is there more apt to write in an artistic manner.

THE STUDY OF FORM

Structure

The essay has not developed any well-recognized structural forms. In larger works, we may sometimes find the chapter divisions, as in the romance ; and these chapters may be grouped into larger divisions or "parts." These divisions, however, are by no means characteristic of the essay. The most that we

shall probably find in the way of formal structure will be the indication by number of certain divisions or sections. The paragraph is, of course, a common feature of the essay. As a rule, the paragraph is more carefully constructed by the essayist than by other prose writers. In the absence of a more formal structure, he feels it necessary to make the most of this. The study of paragraph structure is therefore most important here.

Style

The literary quality of the essay is often chiefly apparent in its outward form ; and this gives to the study of style in the essay peculiar significance and greater relative importance. It does not imply that the substance is entirely unartistic ; but it does imply that the essayist is less able to depend upon substance for literary excellence, and is therefore led to concentrate his artistic effort chiefly upon expression. Moreover, the genius for prose style is a gift more or less distinct ; and those who possess this gift rather than that

of great artistic invention naturally turn toward the essay rather than toward poetry, romance, or novel. As a result, the essay, in its best examples, probably reaches the high-water mark of artistic prose style.

There is probably no other form of literature in which the intellectual qualities of style are so prominent and important. Elsewhere, some lack in this respect may be forgiven in consideration of great emotions and great ideal conceptions—may even seem to be a necessary counterpart of greater force or vividness. We naturally expect, however, that the essay will be a model of correctness, clearness, and simplicity. If there is any lack in these particulars, it is usually due to the intense earnestness of the writer or to the profundity of his thought. With all possible limitations made, our great essayists may claim in an eminent degree the gift of clear and simple utterance.

As to the emotional qualities, the essay is inferior to poetry; but it is not necessarily inferior to other prose, if we except the more dramatic and exciting passages of romance

and novel. Emotional qualities are likely to be more marked in the personal essay and less apparent in the didactic. The essay is capable of all varieties of strength, although it is commonly more limited in range than other literature. Pathos is less frequent, though not uncommon in the personal essay. The ludicrous is very characteristic of many essayists, and appears in all varieties.

The imaginative qualities of style are also noteworthy. The essayist, who has less of imagination in substance, exerts himself to give picturesqueness and music to his style by means of a concrete expression of his thought. Nor is the style of the essay lacking in suggestiveness. In all imaginative qualities, it is of course inferior to poetry; but it is probably superior to most other kinds of prose. These qualities will of course vary with the kind of essay: the personal essay is likely to have a more imaginative style than the didactic.

This same principle will hold also in regard to the æsthetic qualities, many personal essays being remarkable for beauty of style. In

general, the essay is probably superior in this respect to other prose, though of course inferior to poetry. The style of the essay is likely to have a fine prose melody. It is also likely to be eminently harmonious and appropriate; for it is a flexible and plastic mode of expression which lends itself readily to all the modulations of thought and feeling.

THE STUDY OF SUBSTANCE

Beauty

Beauty of substance may be less marked in the essay than in other kinds of literature; but it must be present in some measure if we are to regard the work as being in any true sense literary. Lack of beauty in substance will deprive the essay of all artistic character; for beauty of style is a practical impossibility without something of beauty in conception. We may freely allow that the primary interest of a work may be in the thought presented; but if the writer does not reveal beauty in his conception of the thought, he is merely a thinker and by no means a literary artist.

It is probable that, in most essays of high literary excellence, there is a large element of real beauty in the thought and emotion involved. This will lead naturally to ideal beauty in the imaginative pictures which embody that thought and emotion. It is here, as in the lyric, that we must look for such beauty as the substance of the essay provides. It must be sought first in the principal pictures and conceptions, and afterwards in minor conceptions and in the smaller details of substance.

The essay is capable of all kinds and degrees of beauty, from that which merely pleases the fancy to that which exalts and purifies the soul. As a rule, however, it will be found inferior to other kinds of literature, seeking beauty for the most part in the mean between the two extremes, and dealing seldom with beauty of a grand or sublime order. We may find often a fine physical beauty in figures and images. We may sometimes discover beauty of the spiritual order in the feelings, moods, or aspirations of the writer. It is in intellectual beauty, however, that the

essay is most likely to excel. Splendid and pleasing thoughts, finely expressed, give it for the most part its literary rank and quality. Beauty physical or spiritual may add to the work a more vivid charm or a loftier power of exaltation and delight.

In most essays, the unbeautiful element is not large. Where such an element does appear, it is likely to be simply an absence of beauty, a prosaic and negative plainness, rather than a positive manifestation of what is essentially ugly or repulsive. The essay deals in impressive contrasts even less than does the lyric; and such contrasts as do appear are likely to be in matters of detail, in an antithesis or limited comparison. Many of its contrasts are purely intellectual and do not involve the question of beauty. Artistic contrasts are not altogether wanting; but they are the exception rather than the rule.

Ideality

The ideality of the essay, like that of the lyric, is almost infinite in the variety of its

forms. It is simply the representation of thought and emotion through any imaginative symbols capable of expressing them. The nature of the symbol is not fixed as it is in the case of narrative and dramatic literature. Each writer must find the appropriate symbols for his own thought and feeling. As in lyric poetry, the symbol may sustain different relations to the thought and emotion. It may embody them, as in the case of most literature ; it may reflect or illustrate them ; or it may suggest them. The business of the literary student is to determine in each case what the symbols are and how they are related to the thought and emotion. In doing this for any particular work, he will have analyzed the ideal element, and will have stated its various conceptions.

Where the principal thought and emotion are expressed through an ideal symbol, this symbol is the main ideal conception. In most essays, however, these are likely to be set forth abstractly, the ideal element being largely incidental. In such a case, we have simply to recognize that there is no main

ideal conception, and content ourselves with the statement of the central thought and the leading emotion. We shall often find in minor conceptions much to engage our attention ; for the amount of imagination displayed in a work will usually be in proportion to its real literary character. Minor conceptions will appear as pictures, images, illustrations, figures, etc., symbolizing minor thoughts and emotions. We may observe the relation of these to each other and to the whole. In the essay, perhaps more than elsewhere, we are liable to a confusion between these minor evidences of ideality in substance and the imaginative qualities of style. We are concerned here with the mental image and not with the language which expresses it.

The real element in the essay is likely to be large, since the essay is often written with a practical purpose and deals with real things. This real element is to be found primarily in the writer's thought and feeling and in the subject under discussion. The real thought and feeling involved are not usually so intensely personal as in the lyric,

but are more likely to have simply an intellectual and speculative interest. This is true because the essayist is not usually writing under the influence¹ of profound and intense emotion or seeking to reveal to us the secrets of his own soul. His interest in his work is somewhat more abstract and impersonal. Of course, a lyric intensity and freedom are not impossible, and are to be recognized where they exist. Wherever the author creates ideal images, there will also be a real basis for these. Such real elements of a more external kind are as various as the ideal forms of which they are the basis. We can only be guided by the work in hand, determining in each case the realities involved, and observing the relation of these to the ideal products that have been developed from them. The essayist, like the lyric poet, may use freely the facts of nature or of human life to embody, to illustrate, or to suggest the thoughts and feelings that he wishes to express. The comparison between these realities and the ideal result is not likely to be difficult.

Emotion

Emotion is a less important element in the essay than in any other form of pure literature: the author is seldom concerned to utter his own feeling or to express the feeling of some imaginary being. This is doubtless one reason why the essay is less exalted in the realm of pure art. There are, of course, exceptions; and some essays might be intensely passionate. In all essays of true literary value, emotion must exist in some degree; for without it, imagination will not be aroused to real creative power. Emotions are so varied, in kind, in degree of intensity, and in manner of expression, that our only practical guide is the individual work. As a rule, the greater the emotional element involved, the greater the artistic value of the production.

The dominant emotion, if there be any such, will usually be apparent and readily understood. It is only rarely that we shall meet with emotions so subtle or so complicated as to present any real difficulty. Subordinate emotions may then engage our attention, to-

gether with the relation of these to each other and to the dominant emotion. No greater difficulty is likely to be presented here. The study of the causes and effects of emotion involves the same peculiarity as in the lyric. For the causes, we must go to the heart and life of the author; and for the effects, we must go to the heart and life of the reader. Emotion will usually and naturally be subjective. We may sometimes, though not frequently, find it necessary to note the presence of pathetic fallacy. Wherever a dramatic representation of emotion exists, it is to be noted as objective.

Thought

In the essay, thought is likely to hold a very prominent place: it is relatively more important than in other kinds of literature. It is usually valuable for its own sake, independently of the imaginative forms through which it may be expressed. This is true because, in most essays, the thought furnishes the reason for the production, while the artistic form of expression is secondary and in a

sense subordinate. The thought is comparatively easy to discover; and the concrete forms in which it is expressed do not usually present any difficulty in the way of its interpretation. Indeed, these concrete forms commonly exist for the professed purpose of making the thought clearer and more emphatic. Where any real difficulty is found, it is usually a difficulty inherent in the thought itself, because of its profundity, intricacy, or abstruseness.

Our first business is, of course, to make a definite statement of the central thought. Very often, this thought is stated in the essay itself in abstract and precise terms or through concrete forms easily interpreted. Where this is not the case, we shall probably best reach our end by considering the general impression left upon our minds by the whole production. Sometimes various aspects or phases of this main thought are presented; and occasionally these several aspects appear as successive steps in the development of the whole course of thought.

We may next proceed to analyze the

thought. This study of the thought development is of much importance in the essay; for it is here that we are led to see how the author has introduced his thought, in what manner he has treated it, and how he has brought his presentation of it to an effective conclusion. Separate thoughts will often call for special consideration on account of their importance or difficulty: the minuteness of our study will of course be determined by the value of the thought itself. In studying the progress of the thought, the structure will be even more serviceable than in other kinds of literature; for in the essay, structure is mainly determined by the arrangement of the thought. The most common structural indications are the paragraphs. So far as these are well constructed, they will be accurate guides to the minor divisions of the thought: they are not always, however, infallible indexes. Certain groups of paragraphs will correspond with larger divisions. Where the work is divided into sections, chapters, or other equivalent parts, these will reveal the thought in its main outlines.

OUTLINE FOR THE STUDY OF THE ESSAY.

I. — THE STUDY OF THE FORM.

A. — *Structure*.

1. Chapters, sections, etc.

2. Paragraphs.

B. — *Style*.²

II. — THE STUDY OF THE SUBSTANCE.

A. — *Beauty*.³

B. — *Ideality*.³

C. — *Emotion*.³

D. — *Thought*.¹

¹ See General Outline, pp. 80-81.

² See Outline for the Study of Epic Poetry, pp. 108-109.

³ See Outline for the Study of Lyric Poetry, p. 128.

CHAPTER X

THE STUDY OF THE NOVEL

THE novel deals principally with humanity.

(In the treatment of individual character, it is dealing mostly with man ; and in the treatment of character relations, it is dealing with human life.) We have seen that drama, being chiefly concerned with human action, is more likely to emphasize the latter. (In the novel, however, man is likely to be more prominent ; for action is not so important, and there is more opportunity for psychological analysis.) (Another important difference between drama and novel is that the latter deals with the common man and emphasizes the worth of the individual soul.) The novel holds closely to the human centre ; but it is very free in showing the relation of humanity to the other great subjects. Thought concerning God will be involved in any treatment of man's moral

or religious nature. The spiritual world is less often a subject of consideration. In many of our best novels, there is very suggestive and sympathetic treatment of nature. The treatment of art is incidental, but not infrequent.

(The novel is practically a combination of the drama and the romance. It is like the drama in substance and in purpose, and is therefore to be regarded as dramatic literature. It is like the romance in form and method; for it presents its characters and its plot by means of direct prose narration.) Even more than the prose drama, the novel is the typical prose representative of the dramatic impulse; for the true realm of the drama is poetry, and the novel has made good its position as the most appropriate literary form for the representation of life in its more prosaic aspects. (The novel is often inclined to a looseness of construction which the strict unity of drama would not tolerate.) It is not so strenuous as drama in demanding that the action shall be complete and self-explanatory; for the novelist may easily inform or explain where he fails to

represent. Even more than drama, the novel emphasizes probability.

(The novel has a number of traditional varieties. There are, for instance, novels historical, ethical, psychological, didactic, satirical, of life and manners, of adventure, of definite purpose. Such a classification has a certain practical value; but it is not based upon any significant principles. All of these varieties may be grouped into three classes: these may be called the romantic, the idealistic, and the realistic.)

The romantic novel, as the name indicates, has a leaning toward the romance. As compared with other classes of novels, it gives greater prominence to the plot and less prominence to the characters. It also chooses subjects beyond the limits of ordinary life, and gives greater emphasis than do the other classes to the liberties of fiction. Sometimes a work will seem to be almost on the border line between novel and romance. So long, however, as the plot does not clearly dominate the characters, or the action pass into the region of the extremely improbable, the

work may fairly be called a romantic novel. Still further, the human element in a romantic novel should be natural and lifelike, while in a romance it may be vague and shadowy.

The realistic novel stands at the opposite extreme from the romantic. It shows a decided preference for the study of life and character, and makes the plot distinctly subordinate. It also strongly emphasizes the limitations rather than the liberties of fiction. In extremely realistic novels, the tendency is to minimize the plot and to make the work as nearly as possible a reflection of actual life. Absolute realism is an impossibility: nature may be imitated, but not reproduced. This, however, is no disadvantage to the artist; for it is his business, not to copy, but to interpret and create. It is a false realism which depends upon observation rather than imagination, which contents itself with life's surface realities, or which seeks in the name of art to portray human vileness and depravity. The true realism seeks those spiritual realities which underlie all human life and which are to be discovered only by the

insight of genius and portrayed only through the power of a great imagination.

The term idealistic may be used to characterize certain novels in which imagination is allowed sufficient range but is more regulated and restrained than in the romantic novel. Practically, it may be applied to a type of novel which handles a realistic subject in a highly imaginative manner: the imagination constantly tends to emphasize its liberties, but is restrained by the fact that its subject belongs to the actual world. In dealing with life, this type of novel idealizes the characters and their relations, while at the same time it remains true to the fundamental realities of human life. The interest in the plot is usually very great, though subordinate to the interest in humanity.

THE STUDY OF FORM

Structure

The formal structure of the novel, like its prose form and its direct narration, is borrowed from the romance. If there is any difference,

it is that the structure of the novel is somewhat more fixed and uniform. Indeed, the division of the novel into chapters is almost as stereotyped as the division of the drama into acts and scenes. The division into books is not quite so general; but it is still very common. Paragraphs in the novel are more real and significant parts of the structure than in the romance. Dialogue is so informal that it can hardly be regarded as a fixed structural element.

Style

The style of the novel does not differ essentially from that of other prose writings. Like the style of the drama, it should be objective in dialogue. As compared with the style of the romance, it is on the whole more fully developed as a vehicle of literary expression. In some cases, it has fallen into the hands of masters of prose; but it cannot claim preëminence over the essay.

There is every reason why the novel should possess the intellectual qualities of style in a high degree. Its prose form is suited to the

expression of pure thought. It has the still greater advantage of its origin and growth in an age of great prose. Its narrative method is conducive to simplicity in expression; and clearness is usually a natural consequence. The greatest defects arise from the tendency of the novelist to concentrate his attention upon the ideal creations and allow the style to take care of itself.

In the emotional qualities of style, the novel is inferior only to poetry. The play of emotions is less varied and intense than in the drama; but still, the novel is a portrayal of life, and we may therefore expect to find in its style all varieties of strength, pathos, and the ludicrous. The narrative form is not especially favourable to an emotional style; but in this respect the novel is at no disadvantage as compared with other prose.

Imaginative qualities are less marked than in poetry; but a satisfactory comparison with other prose is made difficult by the great diversity of novels in this particular. As already noted in the case of the drama, the imaginative qualities in the style will depend upon the

author, the characters, and the attendant circumstances. The style of some novels may be notably imaginative, while that of others is comparatively plain. The average novel is probably less imaginative in style than the average romance or essay." Where imaginative qualities are marked, the style of the novel is likely to be both concrete and suggestive.

Very much the same principles will apply in the case of the æsthetic qualities; for the imaginative and the beautiful are apt to be associated with each other. The style of the novel will be distinctly less beautiful than that of most poetry. Even in prose styles, however, there is great diversity; and the beauty of the novelist's style will be in proportion to the poetical capabilities of the man and the subject. The style of most novelists is probably surpassed in beauty by that of other great prose writers.

THE STUDY OF SUBSTANCE

Beauty

In the novel, even more than in the drama, doubt is raised as to whether beauty is the

supreme end. Extreme realism insists upon fidelity to life as the novelist's main purpose, insists even upon his right to portray whatever he finds in humanity. If, however, the novel is a work of art, it must conform to the laws of all literature. It may fairly seek ideal truth as one of its objects; but through this it must reach the ultimate end of ideal beauty. If it concerns itself with the deformities of humanity, or even with truth and morality, for their own sake, it spoils a fine work of art to make a foul study of human disease or a weak treatise on philosophy, science, or religion.

We may expect to find beauty manifested in the novel substantially as in the drama. First of all, then, in the portrayal of humanity. Characters will be beautiful, in body, mind, and spirit. Beauty will also appear in the general picture of life. There is, of course, more opportunity in the novel to reveal the common and unheroic side of life; but it is the test of true artistic genius that it can discover beauty even here. We may also expect to find beauty in the plot. It will appear in the gen-

eral effect of the story and in the various events. Beautiful details are not likely to be so numerous or so impressive as in the drama ; but we shall still find much to observe.

The beauty of the novel is humbler in its origin and in its manifestations than the beauty of poetry or romance. It is not, however, less true or less varied. It is the function of the novelist to discover and to portray the beauty of common life ; and if he fails, it is because he lacks the requisite insight and creative power. Physical beauty there may easily be ; but we must see that the common man is also capable of beauty intellectual and spiritual. Otherwise, the novel is false to life and to art ; for the world is full of noble thinking, of lofty aspiration, of pure motive and impulse.

The unbeautiful element is likely to be large. The novelist does not often seek the grander contrasts of epic and drama ; but he is compelled to recognize that life contains much that is coarse and evil, and his portrayal will naturally involve such contrasts as life itself affords. These contrasts will appear in characters, in relations, in events : they are more likely to

be found in the human element than in the plot. Where the novelist portrays evil and baseness in excess or for their own sake, he is morbid or false.

Ideality

Like the drama, the novel is primarily a representation of a certain section of human life. This representation is made through the medium of narrative. Therefore the ideal element in the novel will consist of the general picture of life, the individual characters, and the plot. As in the drama, a grasp of the leading outlines and general effect of this representation will give us the main ideal conception and will prepare us for the more intelligent study of details.

We may then turn to the study of the general picture of life. Here we are concerned first with the particular section of life which the novel portrays; for it is desirable that we should know the relation of the life represented in the novel to human life in general. Our further study has to do with the relations of character which make up the picture of life.

As we have seen in the drama, these relations are best made apparent through a consideration of the groups into which characters naturally fall by virtue of their relations. The principles of association by which the groups are formed will be much the same as in the drama, and will vary with the individual work and with the relations there represented. In most novels, on account of their greater freedom, the groups will not be so well defined as in the drama.

The study of individual character involves the two points of consideration already noted — namely, character-portrayal and character-development. We shall not always find these as distinctly marked as in the drama; and the point at which portrayal is practically complete and development begins must be a matter for judgment independently of the structural divisions of the work. Of course, some characters are portrayed only in the barest outline; and others receive practically no development. In the great characters of great novels, we shall find character study most fully illustrated. In any case, we are simply to interpret what the

author has represented, whether it be meagre or complete. We have seen that the drama makes its representation of character almost entirely by means of dialogue and action. In addition to these, the novel uses also direct description and exposition of character. The drama, like actual life, lets its characters speak and act, and leaves judgment to the beholder; in the novel, we have as it were an interpreter between us and the characters. We must, then, as in the drama, study those words and actions through which character is directly revealed; and in addition, we must study the novelist's word picture of external appearances, his analysis of the more spiritual elements that lie behind — his own interpretation of his own work. On the whole, this method of characterization is less artistic than that of the drama. In the first place, the author is likely to become too prominent; and again, the direct evidence as to character is likely to be less significant and typical because the novelist can so easily resort to description or explanation. As in the drama, we must hold that the work itself furnishes our only evidence, that all of the evidence

must be considered, that the character of the evidence must be carefully estimated, that testimony as to details should be considered in the light of the whole, and that intellectual interpretation should be supplemented by a sympathetic and imaginative conception of living beings. The details of practical method have been outlined in our discussion of the drama, and need not be repeated here.

The plot of the novel resembles that of the drama in giving greater prominence to the characters ; but in its general outlines, it most nearly resembles the plot of the romance. The main points of interest have already been suggested by our study of plot in connection with the romance, the drama, and the epic. We must first state the result of the plot. Then we must study the development, with its various stages of progress, its different threads of interest, and its effective means. The relation of plot to structure is the same as in the romance. The details of the narrative art will usually be more important than in the romance, since the novel is likely to represent greater constructive skill. The separate

events are likely to be more significant and interesting. The novel is not so likely to follow the simple chronological order ; and so we shall more frequently be called upon to consider the synchronism of events. The arts of contrast, climax, surprise, and suggestion are fully displayed. Episodes occur ; but the novel is rather intolerant of them. Description is freely used : its office is to aid in the portrayal of the characters, to set forth scenes and situations, to give as it were the background or stage-setting. Interwoven plots present substantially the same problems as in other narrative literature : the method of study has already been outlined in our discussion of the epic and the drama. The closeness of the novel to real life naturally tends to exclude the supernatural. In the rare cases where it does occur, we shall need no guidance for its study other than that already suggested. It almost invariably represents something morbid in the human characters.

The novel usually contains a large element of reality. Thought and emotion are real ;

but as in the drama, they are for the most part idealized by being incorporated in the imaginary characters. Not infrequently, however, the author directly presents his own real thought and feeling. Beyond this, there will be something of a real basis for the plot and characters. Very often, this will be simply the result of the author's observation of real life. Here, of course, we can only make a general comparison between the ideal creations and real life as we know and understand it. The real local setting is often very clearly defined. The study of it is interesting and important ; for it enables us to provide for our imaginations the background and the scenes which the stage-setting of the drama visibly presents. The historical novel is a well-recognized variety : its plot and characters are either drawn from history or located amid historical surroundings. Here the question of historical setting is definitely presented ; and it may often be studied with great fulness and satisfaction. The method of study is similar to that already suggested in the case of the drama.

The study of sources is seldom involved ; for the novel seldom borrows its plot and characters, unless it be from history. Where the problem is presented, it is to be studied as in other literature.

Emotion

Emotion is necessarily a prominent feature of the novel, since a picture of life and character must involve to a large extent the portrayal of feeling. The range of emotions is wide, for even common life has its emotions of every kind. These emotions will often have a commonplace setting ; but they will be none the less significant and profound. There is often great complexity of feeling ; and analysis will be correspondingly difficult. The dominant emotion will, however, usually appear in the chief character or in the mutual relations of two or more leading personages. It will sometimes be found comparatively rare and subtle ; but the rule applies here, as in other literature, that the greatest work is usually based upon the most common and most nearly universal human feeling. Love

is, of course, one of the most frequent emotions in the novel. Minor emotions are likely to be many and various, both in their nature and mode of manifestation. Here again, the several characters will be our best guide. The study of the relations of emotions and of their causes and effects will not always be easy. The importance of these matters, in connection with a study of human life, has already been pointed out in our study of the drama.

Emotion in the novel should be objective ; but not infrequently, we shall find that the novelist has given expression to his own personal feeling. This matter is particularly important here ; for the freedom of the novel offers a temptation which too many authors seem unable to resist. Subjective emotion almost invariably injures an objective picture of life ; for it is likely to mar the living personality of the characters and to falsify the portrayal of humanity. The novelist should portray, and let the picture speak for itself, without attempting to influence our judgment by his own praise or blame or by any other

intrusion of himself. Artistic sympathy and impartiality are among the greatest secrets of true dramatic portrayal.

Thought

Thought in the novel ranges through all degrees of difficulty and importance, from commonplace to profound. It is, however, usually more difficult to determine than to understand. If the novel be truly a concrete and objective portrayal of life, the difficulty is that which always arises under such circumstances—namely, that the picture tends to hide the thought which it reveals. Moreover, the novel often approaches the drama in complexity.

As in the drama, the central thought is likely to appear through the general effect of the treatment of humanity and also through the effect of the plot. Sometimes, the author may definitely state his purpose; but we naturally resent having a moral thrust upon us. A truly artistic work will convey its own meaning without an interpreter.

When the central thought is once grasped, its different aspects will be readily seen.

The study of the development of the thought will be the more easy if we have made a proper analysis of the plot ; for the progress of the thought will usually correspond, in its various stages, with the progress of the story. The growing tendency of the novel toward unity and proportion is an aid in the discovery of the thought and the study of its development. Minor thoughts in the novel are often of great interest and value. To ignore them, in any full study, is to miss some of the profoundest reflections upon man and human life.

The central thought of the novel often takes the form of a practical or didactic purpose. The so-called "novel of purpose" has been much disparaged, and justly so ; for the effort to inculcate a moral lesson, to attack an existing evil, to enforce a particular truth, has marred many a fine work of art. On the other hand, however, every work must have sufficient purpose to give it unity and coherence. The real distinction would seem

to be that a work is great in proportion as its purpose ceases to be local and limited, and becomes broad and general. It is the restricted purpose, the purpose that involves prejudice, personal opinion, praise or blame, which alone mars the artistic value of the work. When the novel has for its purpose to set forth some theory or to accomplish some reform, the artist is apt to forget his art in advocating his cause; but when the purpose is some broad study of human life and its conditions, then the work may be great and enduring.

OUTLINE FOR THE STUDY OF THE NOVEL

I. — THE STUDY OF THE FORM.

A. — *Structure*.⁵

B. — *Style*.²

II. — THE STUDY OF THE SUBSTANCE.

A. — *Beauty*.⁴

B. — *Ideality*.⁴

C. — *Emotion*.¹

D. — *Thought*.¹

¹ See General Outline, pp. 80-81.

² See Outline for the Study of Epic Poetry, pp. 108-109.

⁴ See Outline for the Study of Drama, pp. 151-152.

⁵ See Outline for the Study of Prose Romance, p. 169.

CHAPTER XI

THE STUDY OF DESCRIPTIVE LITERATURE

WE have observed that literature in general tends to seek the human centre. This is least true of description. Something of human interest may be always involved; but humanity is far from being an exclusive subject of treatment. Indeed, description may conceivably deal with objects falling under any of the general classes of literary subject-matter. Probably nature is the most frequent subject of descriptive effort: description of natural objects is common and comparatively easy. Scarcely less so is the description of works of human art. Next comes the subject of humanity. Man may be described, either in his person or in his character. So also may the various states, conditions, and relations of human life. With God in His person, description is least likely to deal, although this

is not altogether inconceivable; but it may easily deal with certain attributes or activities of the Deity. Spiritual beings and their attributes are also possible and not infrequent subjects of description.

The fundamental characteristic of description is that it seeks to represent objects through language. In other literature, we speak most naturally of a subject of treatment. In description, we may more significantly speak of an object of portrayal. Such objects are of a great variety of kinds. Objects of sight are the most common; but description may also appeal to any of the other senses. Nor does it stop here; for what has been said as to its treatment of humanity and of superhuman beings implies that it may represent the spiritual as well as the material. It is sometimes assumed that pure description is properly a real product. This, however, is a narrow view of its office; for just as narrative may take the form of history or of epic poetry, so description may be either real or ideal. Of course, ideal description alone can be called literature.

We have already observed that description is commonly found associated with other literary forms, and has probably produced no typical works of its own class. Obviously, then, a definite classification of its varieties is out of the question. The most evident division is into descriptive poetry and descriptive prose. Common to both forms of expression, there are certain familiar kinds or modes of description. With reference to the effect produced, description may be either circumstantial or dynamic. The former seeks to portray the object in its details, to inform us thoroughly as to all its features. The latter selects what is striking and effective, and seeks to convey to us the special impressions which the object seems fitted to create. With reference to the spirit of the portrayal, description may be either objective or subjective. Objective description seeks to portray the object exactly as it is, with no alteration of its attributes or characteristics : such description need be none the less ideal because of its objective nature. Subjective description portrays the object rather as it

affects the describer or as it is coloured by his mood. Something of a lyrical effect is thus produced ; but we need not therefore hold with those who assume that the descriptive character of the portrayal is necessarily lost in the lyrical spirit. Circumstantial description is more likely to be objective ; and dynamic description is more likely to be subjective. The nature of the description is of course largely determined by the kind of literature with which it is found in union.

THE STUDY OF FORM

Structure

Inasmuch as description is a type of literature without any specific forms of its own, it can hardly be said to involve the problem of structure at all. At best, it does so only in a very elementary way. Of course, we may have here, as elsewhere, the structure of the paragraph or the stanza ; but beyond this, the structure of description is lost in the structure of the work of which it forms

a part. Indeed, paragraph and stanza are themselves features of this larger structure. They may, however, be observed particularly in their relation to the descriptive passages.

Metre

In its poetic forms, description will involve the subject of metre. As descriptive poetry is found mingled with epic, lyric, and drama, its metres may be of almost any kind and will involve almost all metrical problems. Our only business is to observe the kind of metre used in any particular passage and to study it according to the principles already laid down. It may be noted that metre often serves the descriptive purpose by helping in the vivid portrayal of the object. To the description of certain objects, for instance, poetry is much better adapted than prose; and the nature of the verse is often determined by the particular descriptive purpose.

Style

Good description is difficult to accomplish in language; and the writer needs all the

resources of style in order to attain his object. It follows that the style of admirable and effective description is likely to be of a high order of excellence and to have its artistic qualities strongly marked.

Descriptive style is not usually very intellectual; but since the author is concerned to make his language convey definite and distinct impressions, it is likely to possess in some degree the ordinary intellectual qualities. It will probably be as correct as any other good literary style. In clearness, it should excel; for description that does not readily convey its meaning fails in its main purpose. It will not usually possess simplicity; for descriptive style is often heightened and strained to produce striking effects.

The very energy of the effort to make strong and definite impressions will tend to emphasize the emotional qualities. Strength is likely to be the most notable: its nature will of course depend upon the object described, the feeling of the author, and the energy of the descriptive effort. Pathos and the ludicrous are less common; but they will

of course appear whenever the described object is of a character to excite tender or humorous feeling.

In order to accomplish the essential purpose of description, the portrayal of objects, it is necessary that style should be highly imaginative. The nature of the imaginative qualities will depend largely upon the object portrayed. If, for instance, it be physical, the style will be concrete. If it be visible, the style will be picturesque. If it be spiritual, suggestiveness will be added to concreteness.

Descriptive style will usually tend to be beautiful; but this again depends upon the object. If that be beautiful, it will tend to produce æsthetic qualities in style. If the object be unbeautiful, the style is likely to be lacking in melody, but may manifest in a high degree the beauty of harmony between sound and sense. Propriety may of course be manifested in any case. Descriptive poetry will usually have more of beauty in its style, as well as more of emotion and imagination, than descriptive prose.

THE STUDY OF SUBSTANCE

Beauty

In the study of literary substance, we have found that the beauty of narration is the beauty of the story, that the beauty of subjective literature is the beauty of the image or symbol presented, and that the beauty of dramatic literature is the beauty of life and character. The beauty of substance in description is the beauty of the object portrayed. Such beauty may, of course, be very great. We may expect to find it first in the author's main conception of the object which he presents to the imagination. It will also appear in various parts of the object; and as we pass from these minor conceptions to the smaller details of the description, we may discover many illustrations of its presence.

Dealing with such a great variety of objects, description may involve beauty of many kinds and degrees. Physical beauty will be most frequent, since description most often portrays material things. The description of mental characteristics or states may involve

beauty of the intellectual order ; but this is rather less common. Spiritual beauty is only less frequent than physical. The author describes character, motives, spiritual states and conditions ; and in so doing, he may present to us the spiritual beauty of lofty souls, of pure purposes, of sweet and noble lives. In all of these kinds, beauty may be of all degrees, from the pleasing or attractive to the grand or sublime.

Description may often involve an unbeautiful element, since it is quite possible for it to portray unbeautiful objects. Where such an element appears, it is likely to be very strongly marked. Its portrayal is usually made for a very definite purpose. Unbeautiful objects are seldom presented for their own sake, but almost invariably as foils for the beautiful. Description is fond of those striking contrasts which form such a large element in all literature ; for by contrast, its desired effects are presented with greater vividness and power. The principle holds here, as elsewhere, that the portrayal of the unbeautiful is artistic only when it serves finally the ends of beauty.

Ideality

The element of ideality in description is simply the writer's conception of the object which he seeks to portray. It may therefore be as various as the kinds of objects described. It is most often the mental picture of some visible object. Sometimes, it is a succession or combination of sounds. Less frequently, it may be something appealing to the other senses, as agreeable or disagreeable odours, sweet or bitter viands, smooth or rough materials, etc. Again, it may be the conception of some spiritual object, as a character or a mental state. In studying this ideal element, we are practically called upon to consider what we may call the internal—as distinguished from the outward or formal—structure of the description. As with the plot in narrative literature, the study of this internal structure will reveal the various ideal conceptions of the work.

We may begin with a statement of the general idea of the described object: this is essentially a statement of the main ideal con-

ception. We may then proceed to study the descriptive process, through which we may arrive at a knowledge of minor ideal conceptions and of the relation of the larger and smaller parts to each other and to the whole. Here, we must first observe the point of view — the physical, mental, or spiritual relation of the author to the object which he portrays. This relation is of prime importance; for it determines how the author will see the object, and therefore how he will describe it. The next point of consideration is the structural outline. This is the skeleton which the writer clothes with flesh. To comprehend it clearly is to see the main features of the described object, to understand the plan upon which the author has worked, to prepare ourselves for a more distinct and vivid conception of the portrayal. We are then ready to consider the arrangement of the details. This involves the order, proportion, and relation of the several parts that go to make up the complete portrayal.

The real element in description is often large. As in other literature, whatever

thought and emotion may be involved will of course be real. Beyond this, there are in general three distinct cases presented. In the first, the object is entirely real, and the writer endeavours to portray it vividly but faithfully. Here, imagination shows itself principally in the style, and is the result of the author's attempt to convey a distinct impression of the object. In proportion as the portrayal is faithful, it will be wanting in ideality of substance. This, however, cannot be entirely lacking in a really artistic work : for the artist portrays, not the object, but his conception of the object ; and in this, some degree of imagination is necessarily involved. In the second case, the object is still real ; but the author allows himself more liberty in embellishing and idealizing. Here, the real element is relatively less, but still large. Ideality is likely to appear in details more than in the main conception. In the third case, the object is imaginary ; and the ideal element is of course relatively large. The real element is not lacking ; but it is very vague and general. It consists in the author's gen-

eral knowledge of physical or spiritual qualities and characteristics ; for out of such realities, even the most ideal picture must be composed.

Emotion

Emotion plays an important part in description ; for through its influence, the portrayal gains in vividness and power. The dominant emotion will usually be simple and apparent. Sometimes, it may be somewhat hidden by the description itself ; and occasionally, it may be really subtle or complicated. Minor emotions are not likely to be many or varied. As a rule, some one dominant impulse gives life to the whole. The relation of emotions to each other is usually simple. The causes and effects of emotions may or may not be readily apparent : in any case, they are likely to be significant.

The relation of emotion to description varies according as the description is objective or subjective. In objective description, emotion may appear in either of two ways. First, it may exist in the object portrayed, as

in the character, mood, or feeling of some real or imaginary personage. In the second place, it may be simply the author's enthusiasm for his object or his earnestness in endeavouring to make a vivid portrayal. Emotion of the first sort will be purely objective. Emotion of the second sort will be subjective, but without necessarily affecting the objective character of the description. In subjective description, the author feels strongly, and allows that feeling to modify his portrayal of the object. When this becomes so extreme that our interest is transferred from the object to the feeling, it may produce, as we have previously observed, an effect that is lyrical rather than descriptive. It is quite possible, however, to have subjective description in which the interest still centres in the object. This introduction of subjective feeling is but another illustration of pathetic fallacy.

Thought

It may often seem as though description were concerned simply with the portrayal of

the object and not at all with the expression of thought. If one should describe a real object with the utmost possible literalness and without any attempt to make a vivid and impressive picture, it might perhaps be said that the thought involved was so small as to be practically non-existent. Description of this elementary kind, however, hardly comes within the range of literature. When one has a real artistic interest in an object and a desire to portray it with vividness and power, he will certainly embody something of thought in his description. Where the author aims simply at vivid portrayal of a real object, the thought may be hard to discover, or at least hard to state. We can hardly speak of any abstract principle or proposition that has been transmuted into ideal form. About all that we can do is to ask what thoughts about the object have inspired the description and are suggested by it. When the object of description is purely ideal, the situation is more clearly analogous to what we find in other literature. Here, the author has some abstract thought which his ideal creations are

intended to represent and embody. The clearest case of this kind is where the ideal object is allegorical or symbolical. When description deals with any spiritual object, we may also be sure of finding thought behind the portrayal. The only probable difficulty in discovering the thought is likely to arise from the extreme concreteness of description. Thought will seldom be so abstruse or complicated as to present any serious difficulty from that source.

The central thought is never likely to be set forth definitely in the description, as it often is in the lyric and the essay. To discover and state it may often require real insight and literary judgment. It will usually be so simple and single as not to be susceptible of separation into parts or phases. There may be some development of thought; and for the discovery and analysis of this, we must depend upon our literary judgment in each individual case. We are not likely to be much helped by structural indications. In the first place, description has no definite structure; and in the second place, structural

divisions will usually correspond with the parts of the description, and not necessarily with divisions of the thought.

OUTLINE FOR THE STUDY OF DESCRIPTIVE LITERATURE.

I. — THE STUDY OF THE FORM.

A. — *Structure.*

1. Paragraphs or stanzas.
2. Structure of description as a part of general literary structure.

B. — *Metre.*¹

C. — *Style.*²

II. — THE STUDY OF THE SUBSTANCE.

A. — *Beauty.*

1. Beauty in the main conception of the object described.
2. Beauty in parts and details of the object.
3. The kind of beauty.¹
4. The unbeautiful element.²

B. — *Ideality.*

1. The internal structure of the description.
 - (a) Statement of the general idea of the described object.
 - (b) The descriptive process.
 - (1) The point of view.
 - (2) The structural outline.
 - (3) The arrangement of the details.

¹ See General Outline, pp. 80-81.

² See Outline for the Study of Epic Poetry, pp. 108-109.

2. The real element.

(a) Thought and emotion.

(b) Reality in the object described.

C. — *Emotion*.¹

D. — *Thought*.¹

¹ See General Outline, pp. 80-81.

APPENDIX

COLLATERAL READING

I. — GENERAL

- Corson, Hiram. A Primer of English Verse.
Corson, Hiram. The Aims of Literary Study.
Crawford, F. M. The Novel: What It Is.
Freytag, Gustav. Technique of the Drama.
Gummere, F. B. A Handbook of Poetics.
Hales, J. W. Longer English Poems (Introduction).
Howells, W. D. Criticism and Fiction.
Hunt, J. H. Leigh. What is Poetry? (from "Imagination and Fancy").
Lanier, Sidney. The English Novel.
Lanier, Sidney. The Science of English Verse.
Lessing, G. E. Laocoön.
Lewes, G. H. The Principles of Success in Literature.
Minto, William. A Manual of English Prose Literature (Introduction).
Moulton, R. G. Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist.
Posnett, H. M. Comparative Literature.
Ruskin, John. Modern Painters, Pt. I; Pt. III; Pt. IV, Ch. xii.
Shelley, P. B. A Defense of Poetry.

Sherman, L. A. Analytics of Literature.

Stedman, E. C. The Nature and Elements of Poetry.

II. — CLASSIFIED MASTERPIECES

A. — *Epic Poetry*

Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400). The Canterbury Tales.

Edmund Spenser (1552-1599). The Faerie Queene.

John Milton (1608-1674). Paradise Lost.

John Dryden (1631-1700). The Hind and the Panther.

Alexander Pope (1688-1744). The Rape of the Lock.

Robert Burns (1759-1796). Tam O'Shanter.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). The Rime of
the Ancient Mariner.

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832). The Lady of the Lake.

George Gordon (Lord) Byron (1788-1824). Childe Har-
old.

John Keats (1795-1821). The Eve of St. Agnes.

Mrs. Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1809-1861). Aurora
Leigh.

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888). Sohrab and Rustum.

Robert Browning (1812-1889). The Flight of the
Duchess.

Alfred (Lord) Tennyson (1809-1892). The Idylls of
the King.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882). Evange-
line.

James Russell Lowell (1819-1891). The Vision of Sir
Launfal.

B. — *Lyric Poetry*

Spenser. Epithalamion.

William Shakspeare (1564–1616). Sonnets.

Milton. L'Allegro. Il Penseroso. Lycidas. Sonnets.

Dryden. A Song for St. Cecilia's Day.

Pope. Essay on Man.

Thomas Gray (1716–1771). The Progress of Poesy.

The Bard. Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.

Burns. To Mary in Heaven. The Banks o' Doon.

Farewell to Nancy. Highland Mary.

William Wordsworth (1770–1850). Lines Composed above Tintern Abbey. Lucy. Ode to Duty. Ode on Intimations of Immortality. Miscellaneous Sonnets.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822). The Cloud. To a

Skylark. Adonais. Hymn to Intellectual Beauty.

Keats. Ode to a Nightingale. Ode on a Grecian Urn.

To Autumn. Sonnets.

Mrs. Browning. Sonnets from the Portuguese. A Mu-

sical Instrument. The Cry of the Children. Cowper's Grave.

Arnold. Dover Beach. Rugby Chapel. Thyrsis.

Browning. Prospice. Evelyn Hope. Popularity. Abt

Vogler. Epilogue to Asolando.

Tennyson. Sir Galahad. Break, Break, Break. In

Memoriam. Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington. Crossing the Bar.

William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878). Thanatopsis. To

a Waterfowl. The Flood of Years.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882). The Sphinx. The Humble-Bee. Threnody.
 Longfellow. The Skeleton in Armor. The Arsenal at Springfield. The Bridge. Resignation.
 John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892). My Soul and I. Ichabod. The Eternal Goodness.
 Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849). The Raven. The Bells. Annabel Lee. Israfel.
 Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894). The Last Leaf. The Chambered Nautilus. The Old Man Dreams.
 Lowell. The Present Crisis. To a Dandelion. Jonathan to John. Commemoration Ode.

C. — *Drama*

- Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593). The Jew of Malta.
 Shakspere. Richard III. The Merchant of Venice. Julius Cæsar. Hamlet. Othello. Macbeth. King Lear. The Tempest.
 Ben Jonson (1573-1637). The Alchemist. Masques.
 Francis Beaumont (1586-1616) and John Fletcher (1579-1625). Philaster.
 John Webster (15-?-16-?). The Duchess of Malfi.
 Philip Massinger (1584-1640). A New Way to Pay Old Debts.
 John Ford (1586-1640?). The Broken Heart.
 Milton. Comus. Samson Agonistes.
 Dryden. The Spanish Friar.
 William Congreve (1670-1729). Love for Love.
 Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774). She Stoops to Conquer.
 Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816). The Rivals.
 Byron. Manfred.

Shelley. Prometheus Unbound.

Browning. Pippa Passes.

Tennyson. Becket.

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-). Atalanta in Calydon.

Longfellow. Christus.

D. — *Prose Romance*

Sir Thomas Malory (about 1470). Morte d'Arthur.

Sir Thomas More (1480-1535). Utopia (Latin).

John Lyly (1553-1606). Euphues.

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586). Arcadia.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626). The New Atlantis (unfinished).

John Bunyan (1628-1688). The Pilgrim's Progress.

Daniel Defoe (1661-1731). Robinson Crusoe.

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745). Gulliver's Travels.

Samuel Johnson (1709-1784). Rasselas.

Thomas De Quincey (1785-1859). Klosterheim.

Edward Bulwer (Lord) Lytton (1805-1873). The Coming Race.

William Wilkie Collins (1824-1889). The Moonstone.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1845-1894). Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Washington Irving (1783-1859). Rip Van Winkle.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864). A Wonder Book.

Poe. The Fall of the House of Usher.

E. — *The Essay*

Bacon. Essays.

Milton. Areopagitica.

- Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667). Holy Dying.
 Bunyan. Grace Abounding.
 Dryden. An Essay of Dramatic Poesy.
 Joseph Addison (1672-1719) and Sir Richard Steele
 (1671-1729). Sir Roger de Coverley Papers from
 the *Spectator*.
 Defoe. The Shortest Way with the Dissenters.
 Swift. The Conduct of the Allies.
 Goldsmith. Essays.
 Johnson. The Idler.
 Edmund Burke (1729-1797). Letter to a Noble Lord.
 Coleridge. Biographia Literaria.
 Charles Lamb (1775-1834). Essays of Elia.
 De Quincey. Biographical and Historical Essays.
 Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859). Essays Crit-
 ical and Historical.
 Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881). Heroes and Hero-Wor-
 ship.
 Irving. The Sketch Book, *passim*.
 Emerson. Essays.
 Lowell. Among My Books.

F. — *The Novel*

- Samuel Richardson (1689-1761). Pamela. Clarissa
 Harlowe.
 Henry Fielding (1707-1754). Joseph Andrews. Tom
 Jones.
 Tobias George Smollett (1721-1771). Humphrey
 Clinker.
 Laurence Sterne (1713-1768). Tristram Shandy.

- Goldsmith. The Vicar of Wakefield.
- Scott. The Heart of Midlothian. Ivanhoe. Kenilworth. Quentin Durward.
- William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863). Vanity Fair. Pendennis. Henry Esmond. The Newcomes.
- Charles Dickens (1812-1870). The Old Curiosity Shop. David Copperfield. Bleak House. A Tale of Two Cities.
- George Eliot (1820-1881). Adam Bede. The Mill on the Floss. Silas Marner. Romola.
- Charles Reade (1814-1884). The Cloister and the Hearth.
- Richard Doddridge Blackmore (1825-). Lorna Doone.
- George Meredith (1828-). The Egoist.
- Stevenson. The Master of Ballantrae.
- James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851). The Spy. The Pilot. The Last of the Mohicans.
- Hawthorne. The Scarlet Letter. The House of the Seven Gables. The Marble Faun.
- William Dean Howells (1837-). A Modern Instance.
- Henry James, Jr. (1843-). The Bostonians.
- George Washington Cable (1844-). The Grandis-simes.

G. — *Description*

- Chaucer. Prologue to Canterbury Tales, *passim*.
- Spenser. The Faerie Queene (Book II, Canto vii—The Cave of Mammon).

- Shakspere. King Henry IV, Pt. II (Act III, Scene i—
Invocation to Sleep).
- Milton. Paradise Lost (Book I, *passim*—Satan and His
Legions in Hell).
- Bunyan. Pilgrim's Progress (Part I, Fourth Stage—
The Valley of the Shadow of Death).
- Dryden. Annus Mirabilis (The Fire of London).
- Steele. The Spectator (No. 2—The Members of the
Spectator Club).
- Pope. The Rape of the Lock (Book II—Belinda on the
Thames).
- Defoe. A Journal of the Plague Year (The State of
London during the Plague).
- Goldsmith. The Deserted Village, *passim*.
- Johnson. Rasselas (Ch. I—The Happy Valley).
- William Cowper (1731–1800). The Task (Book IV—
The Postman—The Snow).
- Wordsworth. I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud (The Daf-
fodils).
- Coleridge. The Ancient Mariner (Part III—The Skele-
ton Ship).
- Scott. Marmion (Canto IV—The Scottish Camp near
Edinburgh).
- Byron. The Dream, *passim*.
- Shelley. Alastor (The Poet).
- Keats. Hyperion (Book II—The Assembly of the
Titans).
- De Quincey. Three Memorable Murders (Mary at the
Door of the Marr Household).
- Arnold. Sohrab and Rustum (The River Oxus).
- Browning. Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came,
passim.

Tennyson. The Lady of Shalott, *passim*.

Dickens. A Tale of Two Cities (Book III, Ch. xv — The Death of Sidney Carton).

George Eliot. Adam Bede (Ch. I — The Carpenter Shop).

Carlyle. The French Revolution (Vol. I, Book VII, Ch. x — The Attack on Versailles).

Irving. The Legend of Sleepy Hollow (Ichabod Crane).

Hawthorne. The Scarlet Letter (Ch. II — The Market-Place).

Longfellow. The Courtship of Miles Standish (Pt. IX — The Wedding).

Whittier. Snow-Bound (The Snow Storm).

Poe. The Haunted Palace, *passim*.

Lowell. Pictures from Appledore, *passim*.

NOTE. — Some of the works included in the above classification may suggest an unusual latitude in the definition of the various kinds of literature. The author has allowed himself some freedom, with the view of bringing together for comparison widely different examples of the several literary types. To call *Tam O'Shanter* an epic or *Pippa Passes* a drama may involve a free use of terms, but it is hoped that it will not cause any real misunderstanding. The essential point is that they belong, however remotely, to the narrative and dramatic types of literature, and may therefore profitably be compared with more strictly typical works of their own classes. In the case of *Pippa Passes*, one may shelter himself under the authority of Browning. Perhaps the most extreme case is the inclusion of Pope's *Essay on Man* under the head of lyric poetry. It is not, of course, a lyric in the strict sense of the word. It belongs, however, to the broad class of subjective poetry of which the lyric is the most typical form; and it may not be without instruction to observe how different subjective poetry may be in the hands of Pope and in the hands of Shelley. On the same principle, speeches of Burke or Webster belong to the class of miscellaneous prose literature of which the essay is the best representative.

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